



SESSION FOUR: THE OPPRESSED IS SET FREE

Showing Compassion on those Enslaved by their Demons

The Story of the Slave Girl

RELATING TO THE WORLD'S STORY

There is a lot of darkness in this world. We may not understand it unless we have been through it or were confronted with it. It is seen in the idolatry of the world. It is seen in abuse and addictions. It is seen in people taking advantage of others. It is seen in the bitterness that enslaves and controls people.

Identify a few categories of people who are abused and taken advantage of. Add to the list those who struggle under the control of their own “demons.”

*“God of Grace and
God of Glory”*

CW 523

Read Acts 16:16-22 (*The slave girl's story*)

Watch “To the Ends of the Earth” – segment 4 (19:39-23:06)

- *Express what most stood out for you about this part of Paul's adventure in Philippi.*
- *What questions does it raise?*

LEARNING FROM PAUL'S STORY

A. Confronted with a World of Darkness

While Paul was in Philippi, he was met by a slave girl who was under the oppressive control of others. Her owners took advantage of her in order to make a lot of money. It was a shameless exploitation of an innocent girl. The Greek text said she had a “Pythian” spirit (like the oracle of Delphi) that controlled what she said. People came to her to hear the voice of the gods (often Apollo) and learn the future.

1. If you were Paul, how would you have viewed the situation?

Part of what drove people to visit the slave girl was the Greco-Roman awareness of the spiritual world—a fear of the unknown. That fear leads many cultures around the world to bow to images of gods, follow temple rituals, burn incense, and pray to ancestors. They want to keep the gods and spirits of the underworld happy, so they can gain their blessings or prevent them from causing harm. They visit witchdoctors, Shamans, and other mediums to intercede with the spirit world (not unlike the Pythian spirit).

Want to learn more?

*Deceived and defiled by
mediums, spiritists, idols*

Leviticus 19:31; 20:6-7

Deuteronomy 12:10-13

Isaiah 8:19

Isaiah 44:6-23

We typically don't run into that, and if we did, we might not be ready to deal with it. But we do encounter a spiritual assault on the world. We may run into people lashing out in rage and anger. Some verbally or physically abuse others or retreat into addictions to mask their own inner pain and insecurity—their own “demons.” Paul reveals a deeper and darker reality and our defense against it.

2. Read Ephesians 6:10-19. Break down the different point that Paul points out here.

Paul also said, “At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another” (Titus 3:3).

3. What else “enslaves” people today, deceives their emotions, or perhaps becomes the “gods” and “masters” that controls them?

Paul told Timothy, “In later times people will follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (1 Timothy 4:1). Should we be afraid? Above all of this, God is the one to be feared and held in utmost awe. Hell proves God is angry at those who not only abuse his honor but abuse and take advantage of each other. One day each person will face him as the judge. With those who have not put their trust in him, God will expose their hatred, cruelty, jealousy, greed, immoral behavior, including things done in secret. These are indications that show they are unqualified for life with him.

4. Imagine we are all standing before God as judge. What would he point out and convict in our world? ... in your life?

B. Where Freedom Can Be Found

When the evil spirit used the slave girl to taunt Paul, it reminds us of how the demons taunted Jesus too. They recognized Jesus as “the Holy One of God.” (See Mark 1:23-28.) Demons know God and his power. It makes them shutter. (See James 2:19.) But the reason Jesus appeared was to destroy the devil's work. The spirit in the slave girl at Philippi recognized that Paul and his team represented Jesus, “the Most High God.” Paul commanded the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” Even the gates of hell cannot prevail against a confession of Jesus as Savior and a trust in his authority over everything (Matthew 16:18).

Want to learn more?

*Jesus drives out demons
by his divine authority*

Matthew 8:31

Mark 5:1-20

Luke 8:1-2, 26-39

1. Read Ephesians 1:18-23. Compare the power that Paul had with the power we have in Jesus.

Instead of the gods the world worships, Paul reminded Timothy, “There is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people” (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Jesus fought the battle to free us from our captivity to sin and the devil. It was the promise already in Genesis 3:15. It came at the price of his own perfect life. “It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed ... but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

2. Share examples of captives and ransoms (or rescues) in real life. How does that help us picture how Jesus redeemed us, paid the ransom?

Want to learn more?

Grasp the freedom we have in Jesus

Colossians 1:10-14

Acts 26:15-18

Galatians 4:3-7

Romans 6:15-23

Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1-2 to explain to people what he came to do, “to preach good news to poor... freedom for prisoner...release for oppressed” (Luke 4:14-30). Jesus was “oppressed and afflicted” for our benefit. (Isaiah 53:3). On the cross Jesus carried the struggle against Satan into a victory. And when Jesus rose from the grave, he proved that he broke Satan’s grasp and freed us from our slavery to the fear of death. (See Hebrews 2:14-15.) He “rescued us from the present evil age” (Galatians 1:4) and “the dominion of darkness” (Colossians 1:12-14) to bring us to the kingdom of light. Today through faith in Jesus we share the victory in Jesus and can overcome the world. (See 1 John 5:4-5.) When we get to heaven, it will be the ultimate safe zone where there will be no pain, abuse, or darkness.

Many people groups today live under the fear of the spirit world and its control over their lives. Jesus told Paul to get on his feet. “I am sending you ... to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me” (Acts 26:16-18). We too are sent to represent Christ to the world around us to bring honor to God and peace to people.

Want to learn more?

God’s concern for the oppressed and disadvantaged

Deuteronomy 10:17-19

Psalms 146:5-10

Malachi 3:5

3. Describe ways God works through people to show his compassion to the oppressed and disadvantaged people and bring glory to God.

 Deuteronomy 24:17-22

 Isaiah 58:6-11

 Luke 14:11-14

 Matthew 25:31-40

Motivation from Isaiah

Isaiah 35

Isaiah 55

Isaiah 58:1-11

Isaiah 61:1-11

Ultimately it is about **TELLING THE STORY OF JESUS**, the one who was victorious over the devil.

MAKING IT YOUR STORY

1. How do you see the devil and his forces working in our world today?
2. What false “gods” are people depending on to try to fill their emptiness or solve their problems? Discuss connecting points and ways to draw them to Jesus where there is life that is truly life.
3. Who are the oppressed, neglected, struggling, or addicted in your community? Determine ways you can reach out to them and help them see Jesus.

LIVING THE STORY – PROJECT

1. Learn this Bible Story to share: ***God frees Israel from Slavery*** (Exodus 1,3,14).
2. Locate ways you can serve special needs through [Special Ministries](#) or [Christian Aid and Relief](#).
3. Choose another religion like Hindu or Shamanism or traditional religions of Africa. Compare it with the gods and superstitions of ancient Greek-Roman world. What is the same? Determine the entrance points and approach to share Jesus with them.

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