



FAST *for* FREEDOM

PRAYER GUIDE

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szabadság 自由 özgürlük
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Freedom
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NOT
FOR SALE



Preface

People of faith have an important role to play in ending modern-day slavery and creating new futures. Although there is diversity in our faith and in how we live it out, we are all united in the belief that stealing another person's destiny is a grave evil that must be opposed in both word and deed.

Not For Sale is delighted to offer yet another tool for engagement. This Fast For Freedom Guide that you hold in your hands reflects the statements above. It is written by a variety of people from various Christian communities, in different countries, with different faith backgrounds - pastors, students, teachers, and everyday abolitionists alike. Despite the diversity, there is unity in the desire to see an end to modern-day slavery, and the passion to make that happen through prayer, fasting, and action. All of us can do significant things to bring about change.

This Fast For Freedom Guide combines the spiritual disciplines of prayer, scripture, and fasting. But this guide is not a static document. Its intent is to help the mind, heart, and spirit combine with smart activism. We hope that each day these spiritual disciplines will be the catalyst for action as you live out true freedom in your community and bring freedom to others. Don't forget to look at the action guide in the back to learn how you can be an agent of change.

"The spiritual life does not remove us from the world but leads us deeper into it."
Henri J.M. Nouwen

David Batstone



Introduction

Thank you for taking this crucial step in your faith journey to live out what you believe and as a result, impact the lives of others. In these next several weeks, as we participate in this sacred season of Lent, we will not only remember the life and passion of Jesus, but we will follow in His footsteps as well. Lent is the season of preparing one's life to honor the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, beginning with Ash Wednesday and lasting until Resurrection Sunday (or Easter). It is a 40-day period (excluding Sundays--so you can look forward to the freedom we have because of the Lord's victory) of fasting, consecration, and remembering the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who came to set us free and save us from our sins. These 40 days of devotionals are meant to help followers of Jesus to remember, and to imitate, His life. Jesus Christ is the Great Abolitionist. His ministry involved both declaring freedom and demonstrating freedom. He came to proclaim good news and liberty to the captives and to set free those who were oppressed (Luke 4:18), and this mission is now our mission.

Throughout this 40-day period, we encourage you to fast from one meal per day, except Sundays. With the money you would have used to buy a meal that day, give that money to help bring freedom to someone enslaved in the world. So instead of simply giving up something good, we want someone else to benefit from our sacrifice and pass on those blessings to others. This is the "true fast" that God speaks of in Isaiah 58. Isaiah 58:6-7 says, "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?" The pain and sacrifice of our fasting is meant to help take away someone else's suffering. Our fasting can help bring freedom to the captives.

In January of 2011, our church, Onnuri English Ministry, awakened to the great injustice of human trafficking and realized that God's passion was for justice and righteousness (Psalm 89:14). We were convicted that if we, the Church, are not the preeminent leaders in the fight for justice and in the demonstrations of mercy to the weak, then we are allowing the world to look more like Jesus than we do. One way we sought to engage this battle as a church was to pray each day for freedom and justice for these millions of slaves around the world. Also, our congregation members fasted a meal per day for Lent, and we collected the money that we would have used on meals and donated it to one of the many freedom projects led by Not For Sale. We were able to raise over \$70,000 USD to help provide protection and new futures for children who were once slaves in South East Asia. Participating in this fast infused great energy and joy into our church as we realized that



our small sacrifice could bring about so much good in the lives of others. It was a way to go beyond talking about the Gospel to actually living out the Gospel through our lives. Our prayer continues to be that the Church worldwide will rise up and answer the cry of captives for freedom, justice, and righteousness. As they cry out for freedom, may Jesus Christ, through His Body (the Church), show up and set the captives free.

Praying and fasting until all the captives are set free,

Eddie Byun
Lead Pastor
Onnuri English Ministry
Seoul, South Korea

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How to Use this Guide

This guide is designed to help you learn, understand, and take steps to become more involved in the abolitionist faith community. The following are some helpful contacts and resources to help you take this journey:

1. Please email Not For Sale's Director of the Abolitionist Faith Community should you need any assistance, have questions or comments - Kevin@notforsalecampaign.org.
2. Read the action guide at the end of this prayer guide. The prayer and reflection of this guide is intended to be a catalyst for action.
3. Consider not only praying it forward, but paying it forward as well. The traffickers are well financed. We need to finance the work of freedom. By fasting, praying, giving, and acting, we are moving freedom forward. On both the Not For Sale website and Freedom Sunday websites you will find links to our Fast For Freedom Giving page (<https://nfs.webconnex.com/freedomfast>). It looks like this:

 **FAST** *for*
FREEDOM

MAKE A PLEDGE TO FAST FOR FREEDOM
Pray for those who are enslaved, and donate the amount you would have spent on food to investigate human trafficking and create new futures for survivors of modern-day slavery.

Amount * \$18
 \$20
 \$50
 \$100
 \$250
 I'd like to enter my own amount below...

Or enter your own amount \$

First Name *

Last Name *

Phone Number * - -

Email Address *

Confirm Email *

Billing Information

Payment Method Credit Card Check [\(Copy from above\)](#)

First Name *

Last Name *

Card Type *

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Ash Wednesday- Day 1

Isaiah 58

Pastor Eddie Byun

Fasting is giving up something good for the sake of something better. That 'something better' is a desire to gain more love for God. When we give up a good thing like food, we are teaching ourselves that there is something even more important than the physical food that sustains us, namely, the Spiritual Bread from Heaven that saves us. Fasting is an ancient spiritual discipline, but as with all spiritual disciplines, there is a danger of turning our relationship with God into a ritual that is void of God. That was the spiritual condition for the people of God in Isaiah 58. Instead of enjoying their relationship with the God who loved them, their spiritual lives became a dangerous routine of going through the motions. I call it dangerous because when religion turns into legalism, our service to God becomes a heavy burden to carry, but where there is love and grace, there is freedom to enjoy the gifts of God that surround our lives. Isaiah 58:3 says, "'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?' Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers." Fasting reveals how selfish we are. We are controlled so much by our own appetites.

It is God's desire that we learn through this discipline of fasting to love Him and others more than we have before. Verses 6-7 of Isaiah 58 says, "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?" In God's eyes, true fasting happens when we give up our right to take care of ourselves by taking care of those who are oppressed and in need. True biblical fasting is giving up the bread I would have eaten, and instead, giving that bread to the hungry. The fast that pleases God is when we use our freedom to fight for the freedom and justice of others. The greater blessings of God await those who learn that true fasting is about loving God and others.

Dear God in heaven, our Great Abolitionist who came to set the captives free, we thank You for the gifts of freedom and love that surround our lives. And as Your people begin a sacred fast for freedom today, we ask that You would open our eyes to the vulnerable in this world who are so valuable in Your sight. Give us Your eyes to see them, Your heart to love them, and Your strength to fight for freedom. And we pray that one day soon all the captives would be set free. Amen.



Thursday- Day 2

Psalm 89:14-18

Rev. Kevin Austin

The psalms comprise the prayer book of the Bible. Filled with imagery and power, the psalms are meant to be imagined, prayed, sung, shouted, and danced. Calling us beyond ourselves, the psalms fill us with wonder, hope, and meaning. Some psalms cause us to be silent. Others validate the pain and longing of God's people. This psalm is a psalm of hope for those held in chains, for the orphaned, for those who have lost their jobs, for those suffering, for all of us who wonder and wait.

God's throne has a foundation. The foundation is firm and unmovable. Made of righteousness and justice, God sits in authority over actions that are right and just.

Because of this:

*love and faithfulness flow.

*we are blessed.

*we walk in God's light and presence.

*we rejoice

*we celebrate. . . .

Why? Because:

*God is our glory and strength.

*God brings us favor.

*God is our shield and king.

*God is the Holy One.

There are many reasons to be discouraged and to give up hope. There are great temptations to wallow in suffering, pain, self-pity, and apathy. But this psalm calls us to the bright expanse of God's great hope. There is no room for anything but hope when we realize all that God is, all God does, all God can do.

We sometimes may be tempted to think ending modern-day slavery is impossible. Not so. We are daunted by the task of caring for 150 million orphans. We shouldn't be. We see the seemingly impossible tasks and wonder what we can really do.

God is on the throne.

God can do anything.

God uses us to do the impossible.

Lean into the bright expanse of God's great hope.

God, help us to truly know You and to be confident that You are all-powerful and capable of doing more than we can hope for or imagine. Help us to act with humility and confidence, to live in Your great hope, and to act in ways such that hope is spread throughout the world.



Friday- Day 3

Micah 6:8

Mandolyn Orrell

Requirements. There are so many requirements in life that have been bestowed on us by governing bodies or some type of authority. Depending on the country you live in, you may be required to pass a test and be at least 16 years old to drive a vehicle. There are certain requirements to vote or serve in the military. Almost all of us were told, “eat your vegetables before you can have dessert” when we were children. These are all requirements we have in our lifetime. We have all tried to push the boundaries, but the requirements did not change.

At times in life, we all have asked God the question, “What more do you want? What more can I give you!?” The scene leading up to Micah 6:8 is just that. God appealed to the Israelites, similar to what happened in a court of law during that time. He asked the Israelites where exactly He had broken His covenant with them, because they have broken the covenant through idolatry and occult behavior. To remind the Israelites of His faithfulness, he mentions their deliverance out of Egypt, how He redeemed them from the house of slavery, and His faithfulness to Israel as they crossed the Jordan River on dry land during the flood season. God’s people replied in the attitude of a rebellious child by saying, in essence, “All right God, just what more do you want? Sacrifices on the altar? How many? More money? How much?” They were prideful and would not repent for breaking their ‘end of the deal.’

As a prophet, Micah spoke the literal word of God to the Israelites. In Micah 6:8, God spoke through Micah to tell His people what the requirements are: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. That’s it. Simple. We are the ones that complicate matters. These three commands are the requirements of a Child of God. We are called to do justice towards the unjust and to be a voice for the voiceless. Oftentimes, justice can seem cold and uncaring. This is why we are called to love mercy. Forgiveness is a part of mercy. Just as God forgave our sins through Christ’s sacrifice, we must forgive others. Walking “humbly with your God” demonstrates that having a right attitude towards the Holy God is necessary to have continual fellowship with God. The act of “walking with God” shows obedience to God.

Abba, thank you for showing us what we are called to do: act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You. I pray for boldness and favor as we fight hard against the injustices of this world. Lord, in your mighty power, I ask you to break the chains of bondage and tear down every stronghold-physically and spiritually for those who are enslaved, in the lives of the traffickers, and in our own lives. Let us humble ourselves to pursue justice, mercy, love, and above all else, to glorify You. Amen.



Saturday- Day 4

Deuteronomy 10:17-18

Hermann A. Kim

Justice, mercy, freedom, and compassion are all qualities that drive the fight against human trafficking. And as believers, we also recognize that the ultimate source of these qualities is God. God is justice; God is mercy; God is freedom; and God is compassion. He is the determinate of these virtues. When we grow in love for Him, we must learn to love what He loves, and must develop a hatred for the things He hates. In other words, justice, mercy, freedom, and compassion will be the natural overflow of a growing relationship with God.

The book of Deuteronomy is not about following the law. It's not even about the blessings that come from following the law. It is about love and allegiance. It is about God teaching His people how to love Him as their God. It is about asking the question, "do you really love God and therefore love the things He loves and hate the things He hates?"

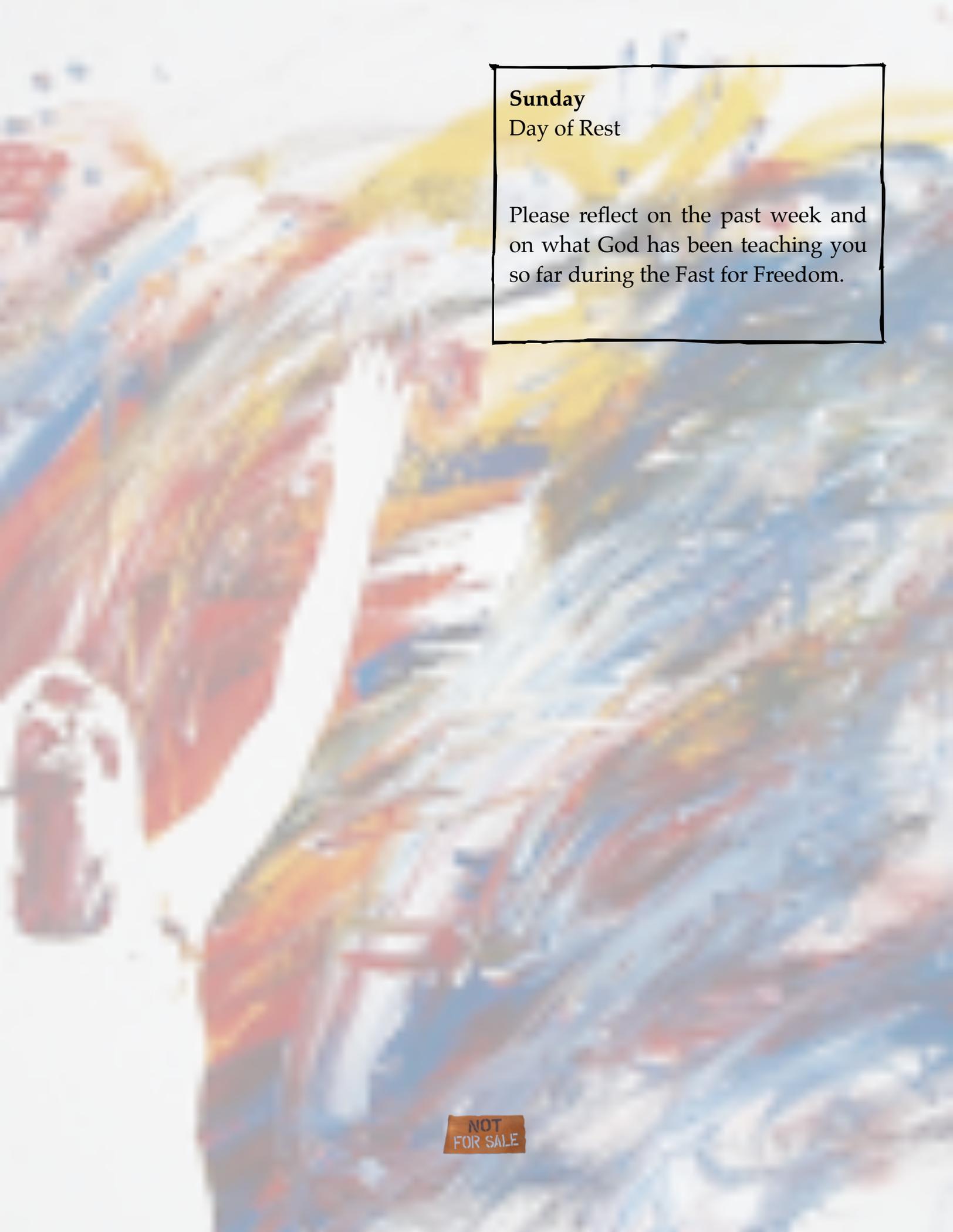
Our love for God as "God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome" (Deut 10:17) must be the anchor, foundation, DNA, and sustaining power behind our desires, prayers, and actions against human trafficking. God is a God "who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes," and that "defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow and the loves the alien, giving him food and clothing."

The starting point for our own fight as a church against human trafficking is to pray for the following:

1. That we would love God more than anything.
2. That we would grow in love for the things He loves and hates what He hates.

"Lord, I recognize the most important element of this fight against human trafficking is centered on Your love. Lord, I ask that You would help me to love You above all else and that You would fuel all my engagements against human trafficking through Your love and because of my love for You. God of justice, mercy, freedom, and compassion, forgive me for trying to sustain this means-to-an-end on my own capacity to love. I want to be fueled solely by Your love and by my love for You. God who hates partiality and corruptions of bribery, raise up within me and my generation a fight against injustices to defend the "cause of the fatherless and the widow" and to show love by real acts of radical love. In Jesus Christ, Amen."





Sunday

Day of Rest

Please reflect on the past week and on what God has been teaching you so far during the Fast for Freedom.

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Monday- Day 5

Proverbs 21:3

Richard Biggs

To do what is right and just is foundational to kingdom living. Indeed, righteousness and justice are not only the foundation of God's throne (Psalm 89:14), but also the *raison d'être* for Israel's king (1 Kings 10:9). As children of God, we all share in the Kingship of Christ. Thus, we are to reign for righteousness and justice in the Kingdom of God now and forever after.

So what does 'doing what is right and just' look like? Jesus is the very embodiment of all that is right and good, and followers of Jesus are called to strive to be like Him. This is a call to be Christlike, and above all, Christlikeness is defined by a close and intimate relationship with God such as Jesus himself enjoys with the Father. This calling entails spending time with God through prayer and worship, and engaging in spiritual disciplines such as fasting, giving, intercession, simplicity, and Bible study to name a few. But Christlikeness also means taking on the mandate of Christ: to proclaim good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

If we seek to deepen our relationship with God and take on Christ's mandate as our own, we will not fail to do what is right and just. As we grow in intimacy with Christ, we will take on God's compassion for the poor, dispossessed, and marginalized, and we will love others because He first loved us. As a mother will not think twice about giving up her meal to feed her hungry child, it will be second-nature for us to reach out and bring the gospel to the unsaved, freedom to the captives, food to the hungry, and healing to the sick.

Psalm 51 tells us that God does not delight in sacrifices that are purposed to buy God's favor, but He will not despise the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart. Spending ourselves on behalf of the hungry and oppressed will be sacrificial to us, but when done out of love and compassion, God will be pleased to see us sacrificing ourselves for others, just as His Son did. And that is reward enough.

Lord, I thank you that You first loved me. Help me, Lord, to lay down the things of the world that I hold so tight, and embolden me to spend myself on behalf of the hungry and oppressed. Destroy in me the spiritual strongholds of greed, lust, envy and indifference. Fill me with Your Spirit that I may be a light to the world, and anoint me to bring good news to the poor. Oh Lord! That I may be like You!



Tuesday- Day 6

Exodus 6:6-8

Sherry M. Carroll

Moses did what God told him to do. Moses told Pharaoh: "The LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go!'" Instead of letting the Hebrews go, Pharaoh increased the burdens and the oppression against them. The Hebrew leaders were mad at Moses, and Moses was unhappy and angry with God. He asked God if this was the plan all along: to make Moses look like a fool and to make life more miserable for the Hebrews.

God answered Moses by revealing important truths about Himself. In these three verses, God begins and ends with who He is: "I am the Lord." In between, God describes what He is doing with seven "I will" statements.

- I will bring you out
- I will free you
- I will redeem you
- I will take you as my own people
- I will be your God
- I will bring you to the Promised Land
- I will give it to you

Salvation, rescue, redemption, personal family relationship with God, support, guidance, and blessings . . . these are the things God says "I will" do for the Hebrew people. And, these are the same things God promises to do for us today. We see this throughout the Bible. In the New Testament, the gospel – the good news – showcases this same offer: salvation, rescue, redemption, personal family relationship with God, support, guidance, and blessings.

As God does this for us, He gives us the opportunity to be part of bringing this to others. We are called to join in God's purpose, bringing God's salvation, redemption, and rescue to the world.

There are seven "I will" statements in this passage and one "You will" statement: "you will know that I am the LORD your God." When we see God doing these things that He has promised – for us and for others – then we will know that He is the Lord God.

You are the Lord, my God. Open my eyes to see all You have done for me. Open my eyes to see others who need You. Help me to reach out as part of Your family to others who need all You promise: salvation, rescue, redemption, personal family relationship with You, support, guidance, and blessings. Amen.



Wednesday- Day 7

Luke 10:25-37

Penelope R. Kim

It is a narrow question: "who is my neighbor?" We all want guidelines, definitions, or formulas to ensure that we don't miss the steps to success, even in faithful acts. Yet Jesus' answer broadens our perspective. He tells us that love is not about narrow definitions of people to whom we owe neighborly conduct (or not) but rather about acting like a neighbor -- to anyone God puts in our path or places on our heart.

At its core, this story is about obedience to God's call. When God seeks to use us in His work, He puts it to us in the form of a choice. It is always up to us decide how we will respond. The Samaritan man chooses to look beyond boundaries of differing ethnicity, tradition, social place, and religion and simply responds to the needs of the person God has put in his path. He shows the compassion Jesus wants us to show one another, human to human. He alters his plans, gives up his time, gives of his resources, and treats the injured man - not as a stranger, but as a fellow child of God.

The world can cruelly use and discard the vulnerable without any regard for their humanity. We are called to be different. The priest and the Levite mentioned were also aware of the injured man's plight but chose to obey the constraints the world had placed on them, probably for reasons that seemed very compelling. Yet even the smallest gesture of compassion would have made some difference to the helpless man.

God has put you here, on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, and has made you aware of the plight of those bound in modern-day slavery. They may be from places far away, with situations that are beyond the pale of your everyday life experience, but Jesus tells us to look beyond such things and see a hurting friend. God has called you. God has put them in your path with a dire need. How will you choose to respond?

"When you look at the inner workings of electrical things, you see wires. Until the current passes through them, there will be no light. That wire is you and me. The current is God.

We have the power to let the current pass through us, use us, to produce the light of the world, Jesus, in us. Or we can refuse to be used and allow darkness to spread."

-- Mother Teresa

Lord our Father, You are our good and kind shepherd, loving and strengthening the weak. There is no need of Your children that You are unable to supply. Grow my faith in Your sufficient grace and power so that I may faithfully obey when You call me. Open my heart to the needs of those who are enslaved or discarded, and open my eyes to every chance to help in Your cause to free them, whether large or small. Break my heart with what breaks Yours. Quiet my fears and give me a spirit of boldness in Your power. You equip those whom You call and You are faithful to accomplish Your will, loving God. Make me ready to obey in whatever good that You will to do through me. Amen.



Thursday- Day 8

Psalm 101

Evelyn Chang

Psalm 101 is one of ten royal psalms in the Bible that deal with the topic of kingship. It was written by one of Israel's kings, either David or one of his descendants. This psalm, which begins by praising God for reigning with love and justice, is the king's vow to follow God's example and govern his people blamelessly. The king declares that he will not look at anything wicked or even associate with evil men (vv. 3-4), nor will he tolerate or stay near any deceiving liars (v. 7); instead, he will put an end to gossips and arrogant people (v. 5) and diligently get rid of all the wicked people from the nation (v. 8). This psalm paints a vivid picture of a king who understands what kind of ruler God desires him to be. Moreover, the king himself desires to serve and obey God by being a loving and just king.

Unfortunately, today it is rare to find leaders who share the same passion for love and justice as the king in Psalm 101. Rather, we see a lack of righteous and just governments, especially in countries where human trafficking and slavery are rampant. In fact, some governments have strayed so far from God's ideals and have become so corrupt that they not only condone human trafficking and slavery, but sometimes even play an active role in perpetuating it. This, however, should not cause us to despair. Instead, we ought to pray with confidence to our God who is King over all the earth and reigns over all nations (Ps. 47:7-8) and ask that He would bring an end to all unjust governments and establish righteous and just governments in their place—governments that will not tolerate evil practices like human trafficking, but will actively fight to abolish them.

Dear God, I praise You, for You are King over all the earth and reign with love and justice over us. I pray that You would abolish every unjust government in this world and replace it with a government that will rule according to Your laws. I pray that You would establish righteous and just governments that will love, care for, protect, and actively fight for freedom for their people. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



Friday- Day 9

2 Corinthians 3:17

Charity Ruth Stevens

In the passage surrounding this verse, God makes it clear that throughout history he has not been hindered or limited by human boundaries. In the verses leading up to this one, the writer is reminding readers that the hope we have in God surpasses blockades and by comparison pales all the other hopes we have to the ultimate hope we have in Christ. It is because of this hope that we can pray with confidence for freedom: freedom from physical and emotional harm, freedom from spiritual oppression, freedom of heart and soul, true and ultimate freedom that is only found in Christ who breaks the chains of the oppressor, and freedom that is ours because of his Spirit who indwells.

In this verse, the writer makes a bold statement. He declares that no matter what the circumstances are, no matter how far away or desolate the subject may be, no matter the foes that may oppose, if the spirit of the Lord is there - then there is freedom. We may read this and think, 'how could there possibly be freedom in a place where someone is a slave?' Remember God's people in history. Moses, Joseph, Naaman's little slave girl. All of them were physically enslaved at some point in their lives, but there is no doubt that they were free in the midst of their slavery. The hope that God gives us as His people is exemplified in the dwelling of His Spirit which brings freedom. If His Spirit is present, there is freedom. This freedom supersedes physical bonds. It is unexplainable and foreign to those who do not know Christ, but to those who know His freedom, that freedom is life. Even though we desire physical freedom for all, spiritual freedom in Christ is the most important thing we could ask for.

Father God, thank you that what this word says is true- because it is Your word. Thank You that we can hope in you, God. We ask that You would grant physical freedom for those enslaved and that You would send them Your hope. And that, most importantly, You would send Your Spirit to them so that there would be true and ultimate freedom where the Spirit dwells. We trust You and we ask you for the humanly impossible because your power is boundless. You are the only one with the power to break chains and bind wounds. So we ask these things, believing that You will send freedom through Your Spirit, and we thank You now for what You will do. We pray these things in the name that is above every name: the name of Jesus. Amen.



Saturday- Day 10

Deuteronomy 16:19-20

Lauren McCall

Justice. So often we pridefully pass the responsibility to someone else, but seemingly never take it into our own hands.

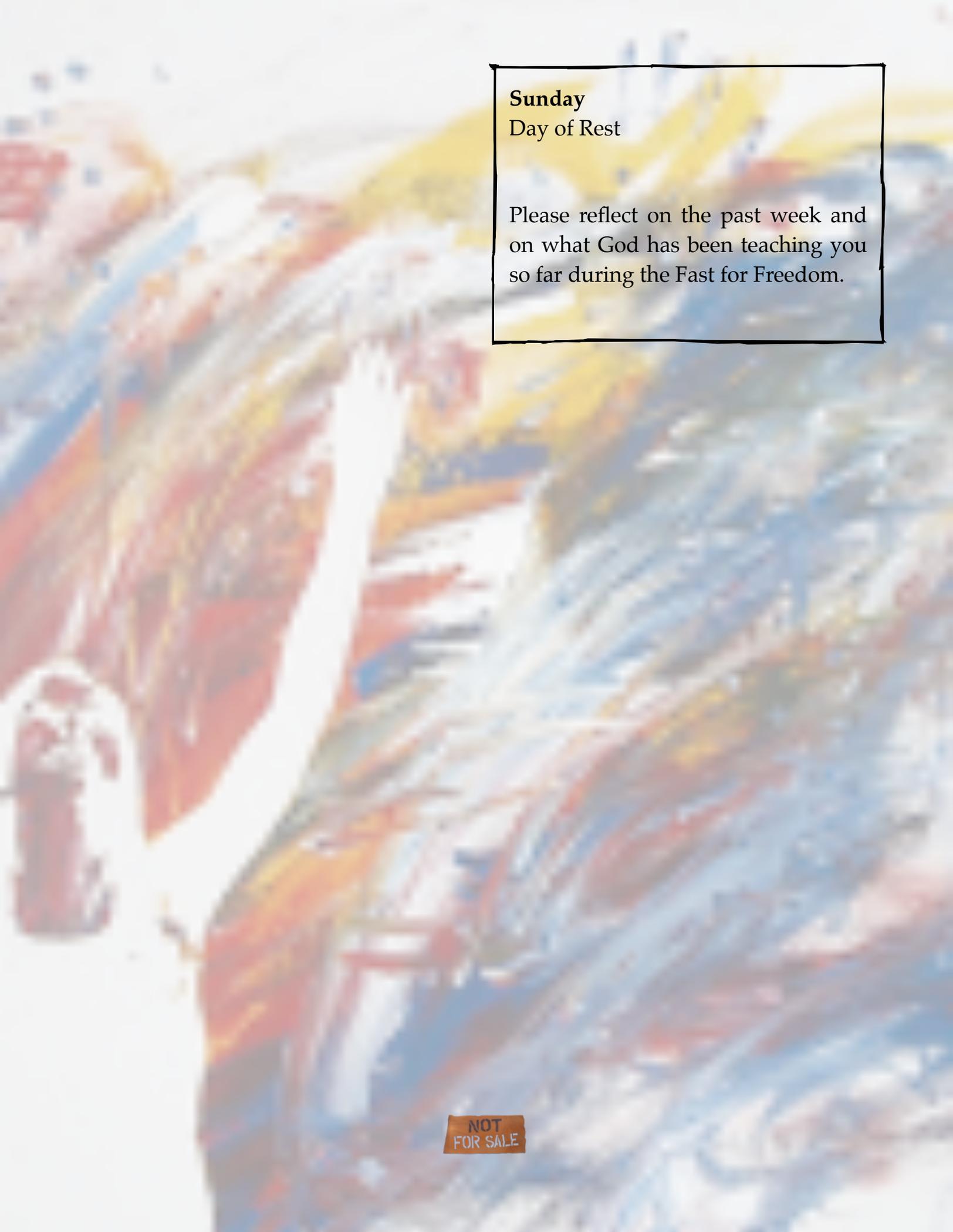
Justice. A command, a discipline, a practice from which none are exempt.

Justice. How often do we consider that it is not to be perverted or twisted away from the truth it demonstrates (v. 19)? That it is something that must be humbly approached with a sense of obedient urgency (v. 20)?

So that we may not pervert it and that we may know how to "follow" it, we must know what justice entails, what it looks like on feet. Throughout all of the Old Testament, there are various examples of justice: caring for the needy, giving to the poor, fighting for those who cannot fight for themselves. Within the context of this passage, however, we see the writer speaking of the traditional feasts and disciplines that the people of the Lord were to take part in, while speaking of the amazing ways that the Lord blessed His people through these annual celebrations. The writer then suddenly turns to the subject of justice, emphasizing the fact that we, as God's chosen people, are blessed so that we in turn can bless others by graciously practicing justice in the society surrounding us. We are challenged to leave this passage pondering the practicality of what justice looks like in everyday life...righteousness...rightness. What a foreign concept in the postmodern world. But this is what we are called and commanded to do: live a life of justice.

Father, keep me from a complacent attitude, so often assuming that I am exempt from the responsibility of showing justice to those around me. Open my eyes; help me to see ways in which I am able to actively practice this 'rightness' to which You call me. Keep me from twisting the truth of Your righteousness and allow me to understand more of You as I practice the justice that You, Almighty Creator, have ordained in Your creative order. Thank You for pouring Your grace and mercy so freely on me and allowing me in turn to lavish others with Your goodness!





Sunday

Day of Rest

Please reflect on the past week and on what God has been teaching you so far during the Fast for Freedom.

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Monday- Day 11

Psalm 139:8-10

Estella J. Kang

There are times when we just want to be by ourselves, when we need time alone. Sometimes the busyness of life gets overwhelming, the demands of responsibilities become burdensome, and there are problems at home or with family and friends. Yet no one truly wants the spirit of loneliness to be upon them. As humans, God created us to have fellowship. He created us to be loved and to love. God created Eve for companionship, so that Adam would not be alone in the Garden of Eden. The scriptures from Psalm 139:8-10 show how God knows us. He is our Creator, after all. His love is so passionate for each of us that He would follow us wherever we would go. Even if we tried in our own futile human attempts to hide from Him, God would be able to find us. Even if we tried to hide from our past, our mistakes, our shame, and guilt, He knows it all and still yearns to be with us. No matter how far, how high, how deep, He is there holding us steadfast in the midst of any storm that is happening in our lives. Even in the calm, He is there still, loving us and guiding us.

Some of us might question where God is in the issue of modern-day slavery, why He allows the suffering and injustice to continue. Just as we cannot understand the depth of our Father's love for us, we also may not understand His will for those who are in slavery. Yet, whether it is in a factory, a brothel, a field, an orphanage, a home, or an office - God is with all of us. He knows most accurately the pain and suffering that those in slavery are going through, and He is with them. They are never alone.

God crosses the seas and skies to be with us. Even now as you read this guide, our Father in heaven is wrapping His loving arms around you, declaring that you are His. Stand tall and with courage, knowing that the Creator of this Earth calls you His child and wants to give you everything that belongs to Him. Most of all, may you know and cherish the knowledge that wherever you are, He is there with you. In every circumstance, pain, grief, or sorrow, He is there. In every moment of happiness, peace, and hope, He is there. In the moments when we feel the most alone or forgotten, He is always there.

Lord, thank you for Your sovereignty. You alone know how each of us feel, how we think, and what we decide. You wait patiently as we struggle to make decisions, to forgive, to forget, to move on, to heal, and to grow. You are always there even when we think You are not. Even when we think we have been successful at hiding from all our shame, sadness, mistakes, and guilt. You are there. Lord, we lift up those in slavery right now; Lord, be with them. Comfort them and provide them with divine encounters with You and Your people. May they feel the prayers of love, strength, courage, and hope that we are sending to them right now. May they know that You never leave them alone. Thank you for your unwavering love and passionate desire to be with us. May our lives be a reflection of that kind of love and passion in everything we do. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



Tuesday- Day 12

Matthew 22:34-40

Hank Voge

The Pharisees obsessed over God's word. They memorized the scriptures as children. They claimed to follow even the most minute biblical regulations. And in this passage from Matthew, an expert Pharisee (the expert of the experts) tests Jesus' knowledge of the scriptures.

The bystanders probably expected Jesus to lose this contest. Jesus was a poor, uneducated man from a disregarded little town (see John 1:46 and John 7:15). He did not stand a chance against a true, educated expert.

But Jesus schools the guy. In fact, Jesus demonstrates that He understands the Bible better than any of His contemporaries. His response employs a sophisticated rabbinic technique, blending disparate passages (Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18) into a new, seamless, and simple instruction. In doing so, Jesus shows that He knows God's word as a master artist knows his or her medium. He knows it so well that He can play with it and create something new.

Jesus impresses the crowd not only with the sophisticated form and artistry of His response, but also with His concise and cutting content. Asked to find the most important commandment—no small task—Jesus goes beyond the expert's challenge. He condenses everything in the law and prophets into two simple sentences.

Jesus' words also carry a challenge to the Pharisee and to modern readers. Everything in the Bible, He says, hangs on love. God wants His followers to love Him more than anything—more than they love their families, more than they love their money, more than they love their lives. And God wants His followers to give other people the same love—the same time, care, and support—that the followers pursue for themselves. No one but Jesus can meet these expectations. Even the devout Pharisees fall short. On our own power, we cannot hope to satisfy God.

In life, Jesus preached that God's word hangs on love. And in His death, Jesus—God's Word—hanged for love. By sacrificing Himself and rising to new life, He satisfied God's expectations for us. In thankfulness to that sacrifice, let's pursue what Jesus preached and lived. Though we may fail a thousand times, let's search every day for the ways that we can love God before ourselves. Such love will change the way we think. It will change the way we love each other. And we had better believe that it will change the world.

Lord, teach us to love You first. May we delight in following You. May You be our highest passion. We admit that we have failed to love You and our neighbor as we ought. We have fallen short of Your perfect will. Thank You for Your Son. Thank You for forgiving us. Change the world through us, Father, as we imitate the radical, self-sacrificing love of Your Son. In His name we pray. Amen.



Wednesday- Day 13

Psalm 103:6

Katy Valentine

This short verse is a powerful reminder of God's expansive and generous care for the poor of the world. The verse reminds us in no uncertain terms that God *works* for vindication and justice—an amazing act of care and compassion that God offers to humankind. I am tempted to believe that this means that God is working for me (and I have no doubt that God is!), but this verse also reminds me that God has a specific desire for justice for “all who are oppressed”. The ancient Psalmist no doubt saw the victims of ancient imperialism, the poor and destitute, the hungry, and the vulnerable in the ancient world. Today, in my home in California, thousands of years later, I see people in nearly identical circumstance: suffering in the face of hardships. There are still the poor and destitute, those who suffer from lack of resources, and the vulnerable, and many of them live in my downtown.

Even more shocking to me are the oppressed whom I *don't* see everyday. Many victims of injustice are quietly hidden from sight. This includes underpaid workers, children lacking loving families, prisoners, and those silenced by racism, war and violence. It also includes victims of human trafficking, perhaps the most invisible of “all who are oppressed.” Just a decade ago in Berkeley, where I live, it was discovered that a local restaurant was smuggling poor workers from India under false pretenses, using them for illegal and unpaid labor. These silent victims were unseen until their stories were heard by local law enforcement and a high school newspaper. God indeed uses all who will answer the call to justice!

Sometimes the oppression and injustice feels overwhelming, and it is easy to believe that we won't make a difference. Psalm 103:6 assures us of God's tireless work for justice. Even when we are overwhelmed and uncertain, God's goodness and love for justice continue. As God's hands and feet on earth, we are called to work for justice. Each action we take towards justice—whether large or small—is an answer to God's call to end oppression. Will you join in the work towards justice for all human beings?

Thank you, Most High, for Your endless work for justice for Your people on earth. We are not alone in the effort to end oppression! Today, may we truly look at our world, seeking to see the unseen. Give us the strength to be Your loving hands, showing compassion. Give us power to be Your feet, striding towards justice. Amen.



Thursday- Day 14

Isaiah 42:1-4

Natalie Wartew

When we consider the problem of human trafficking, we can become easily overwhelmed. When we are faced with the reality of statistics, and the fact that these numbers continue to rise despite the efforts of many, we can be left feeling utterly discouraged, powerless, and defeated.

However, Isaiah's words begin to put this overwhelming problem into perspective as we learn that it is, and has always been, God's plan to bring "justice to the nations" through the person of Jesus Christ. Although slavery continues to exist both overseas and in our own backyards, the time is coming when justice will be brought forth and established on the earth.

God promises not that justice "may" be established, but that it "**will**" be established. Numbers 23:19 tells us, "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" No. God is consistently faithful to His promises, and therefore we can confidently look forward to the day that injustice ceases to exist.

We should be empowered, despite the statistics, by the knowledge that "God's plan for justice" is being worked out through our prayers and our actions as abolitionists.

*Thank you, God, that You love justice and hate injustice. Thank you for Your promise that justice **will** one day be established on the earth. Please, by Your Spirit, remind us of this truth when we are overwhelmed by the problem of modern-day slavery, and empower us to establish justice in Your name through our words, our prayers, and our actions. Amen.*



Friday- Day 15
Psalm 72:1-14
Sherry M. Carroll

This Psalm provides an inspirational prayer for the king to establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace. It has a literal meaning as a prayer for Solomon as he takes over as the king of Israel; but it also has a prophetic meaning as it looks toward Christ ruling a worldwide kingdom. The king — whether the earthly king or our heavenly King Jesus — is administering justice, judging in righteousness, saving the needy, taking pity on the weak, and rescuing those in need from oppression and violence.

I like this Psalm — it is safe for me because it isn't really talking about me. It talks about the ruler needing to be righteous and just, and it looks forward to Christ as the ultimate ruler. This Psalm doesn't have any of those passages that make me squirm because it seems to be asking me to do something I can't — or don't want to — do. I can just sit here in my own little space and pray for the rulers. This Psalm doesn't demand that I do anything else

Oh, but wait . . . there is that little tugging in my heart, the little whisper from the Holy Spirit asking me how I am ruling “my own little space.” I may not rule a country or even a county or province; I don't even rule a small business. But I still have my own area of influence. In my own little area, am I administering justice, saving the needy, taking pity on the weak, and rescuing those in need from oppression and violence?

Do I treat the lady who cleans the toilets at my workplace with the same fairness and respect as the chief administrator? Am I careful with my words so that I do not use any demeaning or derogatory descriptions of people? Am I doing all I can to “rule” in my own little space with justice and righteousness and peace?

And what about doing something about the bigger issues of saving the needy and rescuing people from oppression and violence outside of my own little space? What am I doing about that?

Maybe this Psalm isn't so “safe” after all. Maybe it isn't only about rulers of nations and about Jesus' rule.

Lord, thank you for the tugging at my heart, the little whispers from the Holy Spirit reminding me that I have to do my part. Remind me to pray for the rulers of my country and other countries. But never let me forget that I must also be involved in bringing about Your Kingdom of righteousness and peace — whether it is in my own little sphere of influence or whether it is in something much bigger. Show me how I can help to administer justice, save the needy, and rescue those who are facing oppression and violence. Amen.



Saturday- Day 16

1 John 4:7-8

Jennifer Chun

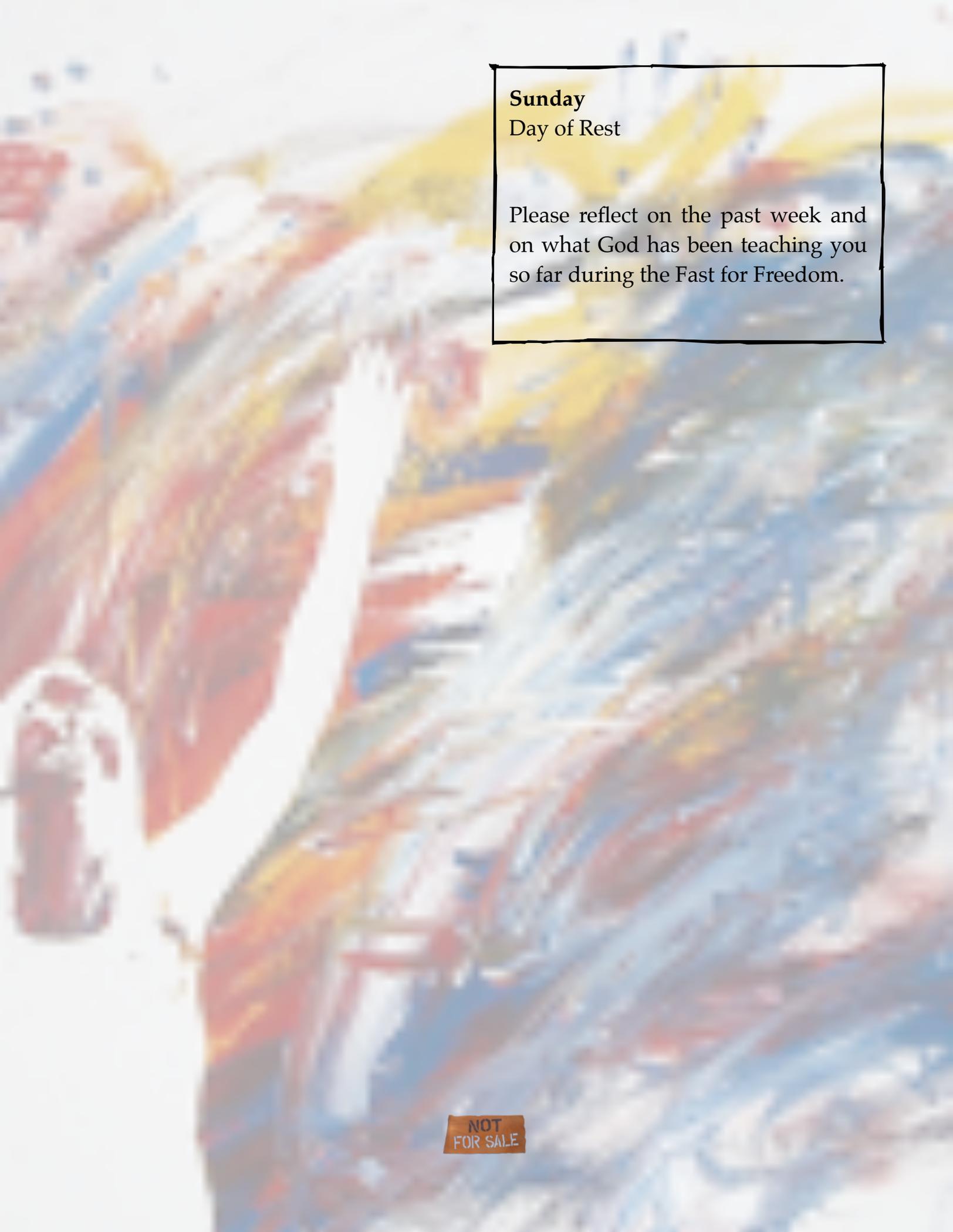
In the eyes of men, what differentiates us from non-believers? Our walk with God is not a mere lifestyle, but a privileged relationship between a flawed creature and a perfect God. Our walk isn't established only by a self-made declaration of a truth we claim to understand. If we truly grasped God's truth in the way He intends, we would recognize the gravity of who we are and from what we were spared. That conviction would alter our lives in such a way that would set us apart from non-believers in the eyes of others. Can we say this is true of us?

God is never edified by the sacrifices of our choosing or by the actions of our gratitude unless those actions align with his commands. We must be cautious not to worship God on our own terms. He has made his commands clear to us through his word, and among them He has highlighted that which is greatest. God showed his love to us through the sacrifice of his Son. If we accept this gift and appreciate its significance, the correct response would be a radical perspective change in us. But how is it that this doesn't always happen? Even in a marriage, we never remain unchanged by the union with our spouse. Rather, our love and commitment is evident in the way we yield, sacrifice, and make decisions in consideration of the two and not just of oneself.

The mark of a true follower isn't seen in our capacity to love, for our capacity is slight. Only God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can enable us to love. The mark is seen in our willingness to obey Him, in our willingness to be moved by Him, and to be changed. The mark isn't what we are capable of or able to do; it is the condition of our heart before the Lord. He can do greater things through a willing person. When we demonstrate love, mercy, and acts of kindness, we correctly represent our God to the world, for this comes with true humility. We must fully know how undeserving we are and what it has cost God to redeem us. We then begin to know why having a heart for others, loving them as He does, is what He desires of us.

Lord God, Thank you for Your Holy Spirit. I confess that I can not do anything without Your enabling power. Please move my heart towards the people You have placed in my life and show me how to love them sacrificially. Help me, Lord, to see others the way You see them -- precious in Your eyes and worthy of Your love. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.





Sunday

Day of Rest

Please reflect on the past week and on what God has been teaching you so far during the Fast for Freedom.

NOT
FOR SALE

Monday- Day 17

Isaiah 1:16-17

Kristen Carr

Yikes, right? Unfortunately, the words Isaiah penned to God's chosen nation so many years ago hit and sting us in the modern-day church right in the center of our hearts. God is reprimanding his people, telling them that He is fed up with their empty religious practices, meaningless offerings, and hollow assemblies. He is reprimanding them for participating in things that look spiritual, but in reality are selfish at their core. He is asking them, instead, to lay aside those things and to pursue justice on others' behalf. Essentially He is saying, "Hey guys, stop only thinking of yourselves and trying to look good towards others. I see the heart that is motivating you towards every action you are pursuing, and it both wearies and angers me. Your heart is selfish to its core. Stop pursuing self! Start showing love like I do! Forget about self and pride, and consider others more highly than yourself. Do what is right."

Philippians 2:3 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others." That passage goes on to tell us that our attitude should be the same as that of Christ, who chose to humble Himself and become obedient even unto death on the cross. Christ chose to operate out of obedience to the Father and love for us instead of operating out of what was most comfortable for Him. Christ's choice to die accomplished for us what we could not do for ourselves. We were in desperate need of rescue from the punishment our wrong choices deserve, and since Christ held the power to rescue us, He didn't allow anything to stand in the way of His doing just that -- not even death. Now He is calling us to respond in the same way.

Which means that it's time for us as Christ's followers to lay aside pride and selfish ambition, to stop worrying about what we deserve or whether we look religious enough to our fellow church members. We must begin to do for others what they cannot do for themselves. It's time for us to pave ways for justice to be enacted, to do whatever it takes to lift the burden of the oppressed, to defend those who have been orphaned and those women who are broken and left alone. It's time for us to do what is right.

Jesus, remove my pride. Restore a right spirit of humility in me. Help my attitude to be like Yours. Help me to consider others above myself. Open my eyes to those around me who are in need of justice. Grant me courage to do whatever it takes to see justice accomplished in their lives. In Jesus name, Amen.



Tuesday- Day 18

Psalm 146:6-9

Bishop Matt Thomas

Unless you are flying at high speeds in a jet, at night in the fog, you generally have a sense of which way is up and which way is down. The fluid in our ears, along with our vision, generally give us all the clues we need. After all, it does keep us from falling over.

But, in regard to winning and losing, directions become easily confused. Some people think that getting ahead financially, or having the most power, makes them “one up” on others. But, if Psalm 146 is any indication of up and down, another factor is more meaningfully in play. It tells us that God upholds, sets free, gives sight, lifts up, and loves those who are normally considered to be down on their luck. He is lifting up those who seem to be down.

Appearances often deceive us. When we see someone on the ground, being kicked and held down against their will, the natural tendency is to see them as forgotten, ignored, and disadvantaged people. What we do not tend to see is that God is in their corner. And He has the power to do something about their miserable circumstances. He has an affinity for ones like these.

The key for those of us who are down is to know that in God’s eyes, we are up, and He wants us to be delivered, helped, healed, and restored, lifting us up even more. The key for those of us fortunate enough not to be considered down and out is to engage in God’s work of lifting up, upholding, restoring, and building up those whom society might regard as the “unfortunates”, the down-and-outers. The oppressors will no doubt get their deserved fate. But notice, in this passage, as in most similar Bible texts, squashing the oppressors is only a small thread in the story (note Revelation). God will administer justice, no doubt. It is always in there. However, He spends much more time, as the Psalmist (146:6-9) spends more words, focused on God’s work of mercy and help. We should, too. The cross was not about destroying something as much as it is about saving and delivering something. That has never changed.

God, thank you for Your many blessings. Please help us to see people as You see people. Help us to be in their corner, as You are in their corner. Give us humility and compassion. Amen.



Wednesday- Day 19

Romans 12:21

Tank Scott

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Paul writes to Rome's new Christians, describing what is expected of them as they live a new life transformed by Jesus' sacrifice. My paraphrased version of Paul's words goes something like this:

Be empathetic. Live in peace and harmony. You are no better than anyone else, so don't pretend to be. An eye for an eye is God's deal, not yours. Overcome your enemies, evil, and evildoers through justice, love and mercy.

These words describe not only how a Christian is internally transformed by Christ's love, but also how they externally display that transformation in the context of community, culture, and fellowship – in the face of goodness, and more importantly, in the face of injustice.

To repay evil with evil is a natural human reaction. I hate to admit it, but when faced with evil, too often, I react with evil. When my husband makes a comment that hurts my feelings, I snap back with a comment sure to slice through to his heart. When someone is rude to me, I ignore them for a week. When I think about traffickers, I am filled with hatred, wishing them a lifetime of pain and the wrath of God. My natural response is not what Christ desires.

Paul presents two options: You can be overcome with evil, or you can overcome evil with good. As a Christian, we must allow Christ's love to transform our hearts – unnaturally and supernaturally -choosing to respond to evil with goodness. For me, this is not an easy choice – but one that is necessary when seeking to bring God's kingdom to earth.

Every Sunday, we pray: "May your kingdom come, may your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." God's kingdom of love, justice, and mercy will only reign on earth when Christians overcome evil with goodness.

Lord, may your supernatural love transform our hearts. May we not be overcome by evil, but overcome it with good -through your grace, wisdom, and strength. I cannot do it on my own. This world needs us to respond to evil with goodness. Only then will it be conquered by the power of Your love.



Thursday- Day 20

Deuteronomy 24:17-18

Rev. Mark Van Valin

Slavery is a central theme throughout the Bible's historical account of God's people. Joseph was sold into slavery. After that, from 1900 to 1500 B.C., the people of Israel knew nothing but forced labor in Egypt. It was God who redeemed the people of Israel - not just from physical slavery to Pharaoh, but also from spiritual slavery to their own sinful desires. He then kept their "memory" of redemption alive, insisting that they not perpetuate such injustice to others. Because of what God had done for them, they were to be different from the rest of the world. They were to treat the alien, the fatherless, and the widow with compassion and mercy.

We, too, are to keep that memory alive. True, we are moved by the unspeakable injustice that we see taking place in some parts of the world. As Christians, however, we root our motives to fight slavery in something deeper. We are set free to intervene courageously and sacrificially because of two important facts: 1) our constantly kindled memory of what God has done for us and 2) our trust in what He has promised for the future. As II Corinthians 5 says, "We are compelled by Christ's love" - and we no longer see people the way the world does, but rather as Christ does. And so we fight, and serve, and give sacrificially - not out of guilt, or in hopes of being noticed or getting credit, but simply out of gratitude.

Lord, what have I done to earn a life of freedom?

Why am I so surrounded by comforts and marks of affluence?

Why have I been given the knowledge of You?

What could I possibly lack in the light of Your promise of heaven?

Am I short of time? Money? Compassion?

Why is such grace shown towards me?

Is it not to extend that same grace to the world?

Is it not to give and to serve without limit out of the limitless bounty of Your Love?

God, help us to remember Your saving acts and then to move forward to help repair the world. Give us strength, courage, and humility. Amen.



Friday- Day 21

Psalm 9:7-10

Rev. Kevin Austin

Working to end modern-day slavery can be difficult emotionally. It's hard work to experience suffering, whether real or imagined. It's discouraging to work against a seemingly unconquerable evil. It's sometimes hard to sleep knowing so many are trapped, under the threat of violence, unable to walk away. However, seen from the vantage of the poet, there is hope in the reality we may not always see. Psalm 9:7-10 presents us with an opportunity to hope. We pray this reality:

"The Lord reigns forever. . . " God is the one in control. God is the King and is on the throne. Things may look bad, but there is no question about the power of God to make things right.

"He has established his throne for judgment". The message translates this: "He sees and sets the world's mess right". God will correct, fix, heal, restore, etc. It's our job to partner with God in being agents of hope and healing to our broken world.

"He judges the world's people with equity . . ." There is comfort in judgment if those being judged are righteous, knowing and known by the King. God will judge with fairness. Those who enslave others will be held responsible. Those who have had violence perpetuated upon them will be given healing. This is a very good thing.

"The Lord is a refuge . . . a stronghold . . ." Not only is God the King, fully in control, and not only will He set things right, but we can turn to Him for help. God is a strong tower. He is also a friend. We can find help by running to Him.

Then a great promise: we can call on God's name and in seeking God we will not be forsaken.

Ending modern-day slavery is a movement of hope. Not circumstantial, not based on our perceptions, but based on the reality of God's position and presence. God is the loving judge. God is a firm foundation for difficult work.

Prayer: God fill us with hope. Help us be filled with your reality as we partner with You to bring healing to our fractured world. Let us see your reality and in every action reflect your love. Help us not to judge, but to rely on your perfect judgment. So be it.



Saturday- Day 22

Luke 18:1-8

Rev. Kevin Austin

In this story, Jesus compares an unjust earthly judge with our righteous heavenly judge. His story has multiple messages. There is the first, most obvious message: God cares for the poor, for widows, for others in need. Though there are some who do not care, God certainly does. When we are in the midst of suffering, we can be certain that God cares.

But this parable is also about prayer, and it is in that context that we see two more messages. The first is the need for urgency. The widow has an urgent request. She does not give up. The Greek translation of this passage describes her actions as a kind of "pummeling," - as though she is giving the judge black eyes from her constant pleas.

The second message concerns perseverance. The widow has urgency and is also perseverant. The urgency does not dissipate -- it is a deep desire that creates an unwavering perseverance. There is nothing casual about her actions. She does not seek justice today and then move on the next day.

Jesus invites us to view God as the one who can bring the needed help. Do we cease to pray because we either think we can do it on our own or because we believe God is incapable of action?

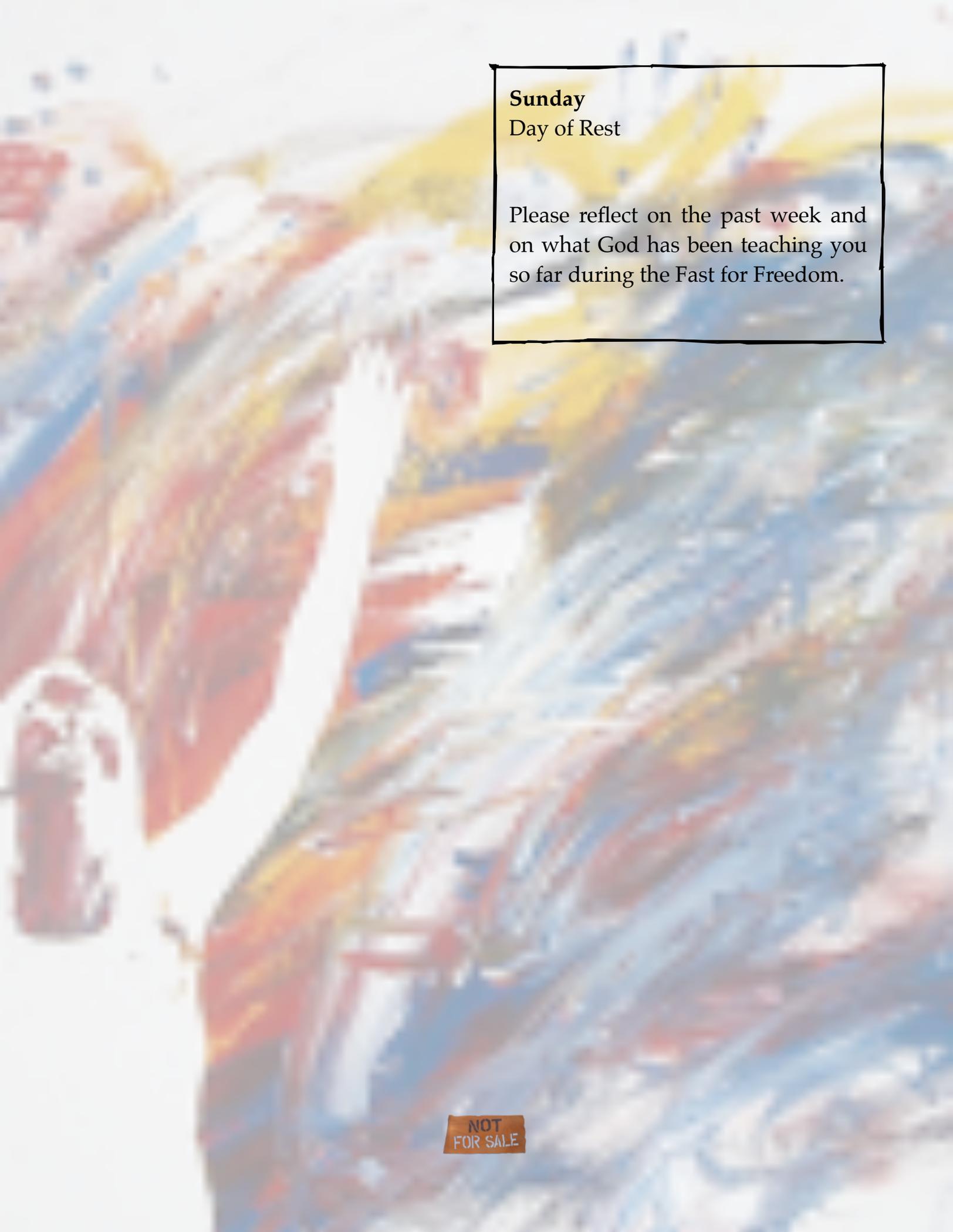
Are we perseverant in our urgency for the poor? Each day millions suffer in many ways. There is urgency. We must act now. Care for widows and orphans, the abolition of slavery, repairing the world, etc, are not hobbies or fads. Are we in it for the long haul? Do we believe God cares for the needy?

Are we ready to do our part no matter how long it might take?

Jesus ends His parable by asking a stirring question. When He returns, will Jesus find anyone who seeks God's help with urgency and perseverance?

God help us to have hearts of compassion, to judge fairly, and to persevere despite the difficulties and sacrifices in order to care for the least of the these.





Sunday

Day of Rest

Please reflect on the past week and on what God has been teaching you so far during the Fast for Freedom.

NOT
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Monday- Day 23

Psalm 10

Jennifer Chun

As it pertains to sufferings around the world, evil actions of men have been rampant in the days of the psalmist, and they are rampant still. Mankind continually lives in bondage to sin, and its wreckage shows up in news headlines around the world. Many blame God or reject Him completely, based on sufferings experienced personally or as spectators. The earth constantly aches from what sin accomplishes each day. The wicked taunt the helpless. In all this, why is God seemingly distant?

Sometimes we are the culprits, engaging in wickedness and even hurting others. In our capability to do evil in action or in thought, we are shortsighted and fall back on the notion that God does not see. We tend to believe that He forgets, as we might forget. Whether in our wickedness or in our helplessness, our temporal nature fails to remember the power of an eternal God who sees all and hears all. In this doubt of God's might and knowledge, those who suffer are just as guilty as the wicked.

No matter what our human eyes may behold and fear, God is ultimately just. The psalmist cries out to the Lord, and even as he laments, he declares God's promise to the fatherless and the oppressed. As we witness the sufferings and agony of people around us, we should give greater focus instead to the faithfulness of God. We must hold onto that truth by putting full trust in Him at times of waiting. These times are pockets of opportunity to stretch our faith by relying on a divine and eternal King, especially at times when things may appear bleak in our eyes. His justice will be rendered. It is in Him we hope, and to Him the wicked will answer.

Father God, forgive me, Father, for losing sight of who You are and what You can do. Help me to trust in Your faithfulness. Help me to trust in Your might. I pray for those who are abused and are suffering in the world. I lift up those who are struggling to see You and ask that You strengthen their hearts towards You. I pray that Your love and freedom will come to those who do not know You. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Tuesday- Day 24

Isaiah 45:11-13

Allan Theobald

It's hard to believe, but many people criticized the work and character of Mother Teresa. One of these complaints was that Mother Teresa took money from some unsavory sources -- even though the money went to give dignity to the dying. Those who get heated about such things fail to see the heart of this Scripture. Isaiah's words let us know that God will use Cyrus, a filthy pagan, to bring His people Israel out of exile. God's plan was to use a Gentile to bring deliverance and freedom to the Jewish people, which would have turned the heads of many a Jew. God seems to have no problem using the unsavory and less-than-holy to do justice. So why do we?

To engage this world missionally, I believe we must be people whose eyes are open to a God who destroys our paradigms, who does things unexpected and outside the box. For Christians today, we cannot be afraid to bring hope, healing, and freedom in ways that don't perfectly fit the label "Christian." Now, I am not saying that we should resort to worldly methods -- don't deal drugs for Jesus -- but if we're too closed-minded, trying to force God to act in the organized, predictable, and neat way we think He should, then we are far from believing that God is the one who made all things. This vision is a domesticated God with an impotent Gospel. It's a matter of putting a principle above love and standard before grace.

These verses begin with God identifying himself as Almighty Creator. God is firmly in charge of this world, and He is willing to do whatever He needs, through whomever He can, to bring justice and rightness to His creation. For those of us steeped in Christian culture and catchphrases, it may be a challenge for the Church to be Spirit-minded and imaginative enough to see God working in the unlikeliest of places. It also may be a challenge to be creative enough to discover solutions outside the Christian 12-step programs to evangelism and missions. Don't be afraid to get on-board with what God may be doing even it doesn't fit "our way" of doing things. You just might get your worldview rocked.

Lord, You are God of all, and all the world in its fullness is Yours. Help us to be people who advance Your will, not those who hinder it. Don't let our ways, our education, our doctrines get in the way of how You may choose to work. May we not be so rigid or stubborn that we miss what You're doing, Holy Spirit. Give us a fresh vision of Your Kingdom and aid our imaginations in finding creative solutions to bring freedom, hope, and love to Your world. It is by Your love and grace that our lives are true testimonies of Your ability to use anyone. We continue the cry of Isaiah: send us, Lord, send us. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.



Wednesday- Day 25

Matthew 5:3-10

Rev. Kevin Austin

In this passage, Jesus is calling us all to realign to kingdom values. Space does not allow for in-depth analysis of this passage; however, these things are clear:

The Kingdom of God is full of blessing.

The Kingdom of God has values different from our world's values.

We are to pursue virtues such as mercy, peace, righteousness, and healing.

We are called to help repair the world and transform society.

This passage reflects in part what Not For Sale means when stating that we need to create new futures. Ending slavery is not enough. Cultural values and world-views must change if we are to make ending slavery "stick". We need to put just as much energy and work into creating new futures as we put into ending slavery.

Transformation of cultural values will take a radical, upside-down strategy, applied by people of humility, courage, and determination. This is what the beatitudes are all about. This is meekness. Meekness is not weakness. The Biblical definition of the word is "strength under control." The meek shall inherit the earth. Be strong and courageous, but under control with gentleness and humility.

With that meekness, we go forth to heal the world, bind up wounds, set prisoners free, and create new futures. We show mercy. We are peacemakers. We bless.

Lord, help us to be meek – courageous yet humble. Help us, God, to live in such a way that we transform society for Your glory and with the result that these words of Jesus become a rich blessing for all. Amen.



Thursday- Day 26

Proverbs 28:5

Peter Cho

“That’s not fair!” If you are a parent, you probably already know this as one of the earliest and most repeated phrases a child will ever utter.

But how can a child determine what is fair when he or she can hardly speak? What allows them to have moral discernment? From where does this sense of justice come?

The truth is, each of us is born with an innate sense of justice. It's in our DNA. It is the result of one of the great gifts- being created in "the image of God" (Gen 1:27). However, the problem is that our sinful nature has marred our true sense of justice, and our evil bent only seeks justice when an injustice has been done against us. This is why “evil men do not understand justice” – because we have twisted God’s gift and distorted it to serve ourselves.

Strangely, the exact opposite was true of our Lord. When He sought justice, it was never for His own gain. It was always for others. We see this when He rebuked His disciples to allow the children to come to Him (Mt 19:14). We see this when He cleared the outer courts of the temple so the Gentiles would have a place to worship (Mk 11:15). And we see it most clearly on the cross on which He died - the most profound intersection of selfless love and perfect justice in the history of mankind.

You cannot know the Lord and not know justice. You cannot seek the Lord and not seek justice. You cannot represent the Lord and not represent justice. God and justice are inseparable because, quite simply, God is just (Deut 32:4). This is why “those who seek the LORD understand [justice] fully.” This is why those who love the Lord love justice. And this is why those who are children of Jesus are champions for justice.

If you seek justice, you will be seeking the Lord. If you seek to understand the Lord, you will understand justice.

Holy God, all Your works are perfect, and all Your ways are just. You are faithful and true. You’ve given me a heart for justice, but may my ultimate desire be not for justice, but for You. And as I grow in my understanding of You, grow me in my understanding of justice. Forgive me for using this gift of justice to serve myself, and help me to use it to serve others. Make me a champion of justice, as Your Son Jesus was. In His name and in His power I pray. Amen.



Friday- Day 27

Psalm 82

Lauren McCall

A Kingship is a foreign concept to many of us these days, as kings and queens exist primarily in traditional European countries, the Middle East, or our storybooks. But what a beautiful picture of the divine order we see as we look at the design behind a kingdom, and how it was created to establish goodness over a society.

The Hebrew word for justice, *mishpat*, is a rich word full of deeper meanings in the context of the old covenant. It transcends the legal definition -which is "to establish the observance of good customs or practices." *Mishpat* involves the wisdom that leads to harmonious and equal relationships between people in a society; a type of compassion to be shown to all people. Often, this role was reserved for the leaders among a people, such as a king.

God is pictured here as King, judging the rulers of the kingdoms, holding them accountable to reign justly over their people: to give justice to the weak and fatherless, to maintain the right of the afflicted, to rescue the weak and needy. The responsibility of our rulers and leaders remains the same today. How often do we pray for God to give wisdom to our leaders to rule justly, to rescue the weak and needy, to give justice to the fatherless? How often do we, as leaders, look at our own hearts and seek to live in light of this justice in every opportunity we are given?

Father, how often we forget the responsibility we have been given when it comes to praying for those whom You have put in leadership positions. Whether they be church leaders, community leaders, state or national leaders, give us the discipline to pray that they would practice the justice that You command them to utilize in every decision made regarding their leadership. When we are put in any type of leadership position, give us the strength to practice the justice that You hold us to. Put longing in our hearts to rescue the needy, maintain the right of the afflicted, and to give justice to the fatherless and weak. Give us Your heart. Break our hearts for what break Yours. Amen.



Saturday- Day 28

Galatians 6:2

G. Stephen Goode

Jesus' model to His disciples was simple. He did, they watched. They did, He watched. They did and He went back to His Father. Then, He left the Holy Spirit to help them continue to do the same things He did. When he left, Jesus said that they, and we, will do even greater things.

Jesus set forth the purpose of His simple ministry right from the very start in Luke 4:18-19. In that passage, He quotes from Isaiah, "The Lord's Spirit has come to me because He has chosen me to tell the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers, and to say, 'this is the year the Lord has chosen.'"

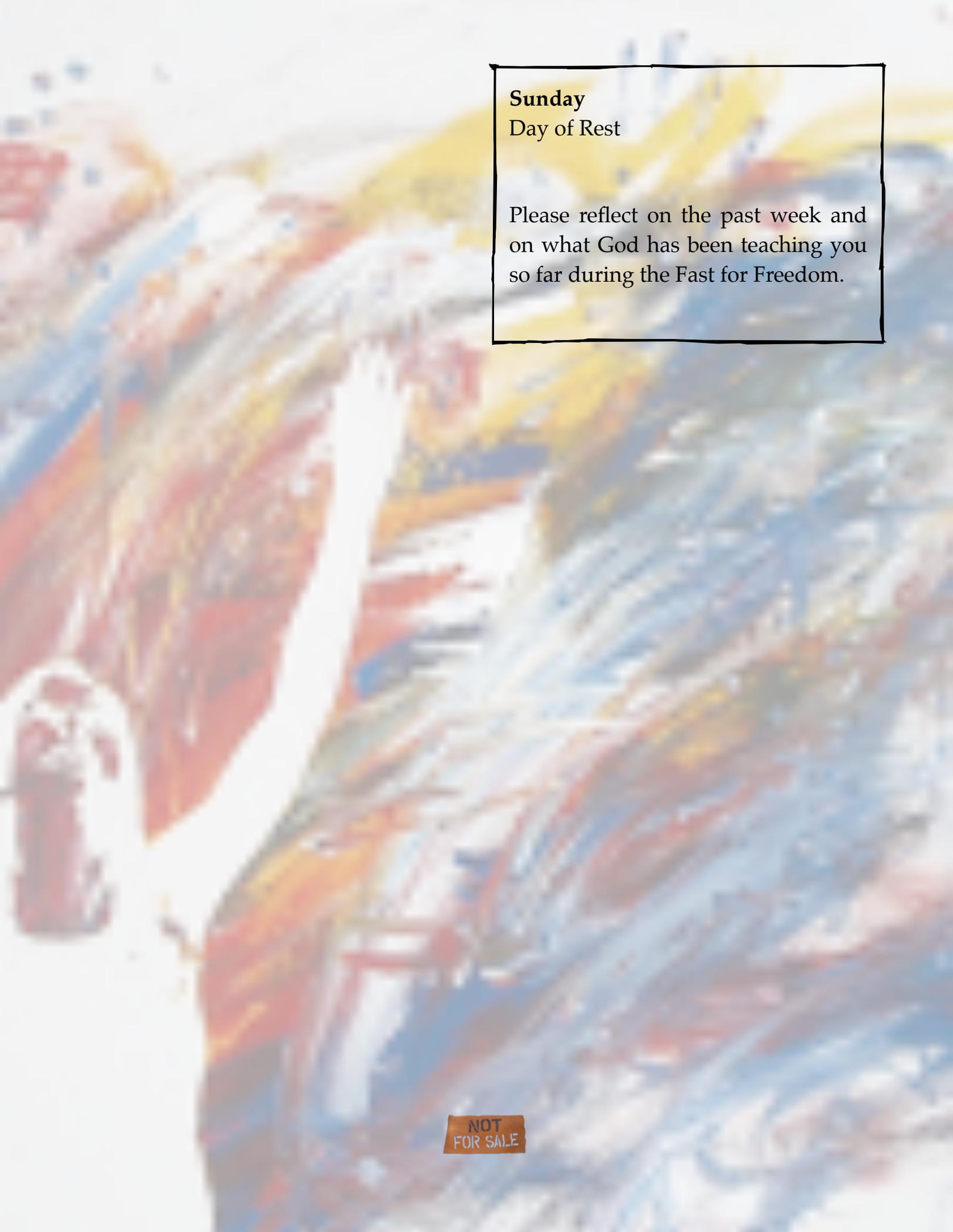
When you reach out to someone, when you help someone, when you meet someone, you fulfill what Jesus came to do. What is the law of Christ? One word -- love. That means loving all people, particularly the vulnerable, and meeting them where they are. It means announcing freedom to prisoners and setting captives free. Love is redemption. Love is deliverance. Love is providing a present and a future that is different from our past.

Jesus came to give sight to the blind -- an act of love -- through miracles. Though we may not perform miracles, we, too, can give sight to the blind through sight-giving surgeries or through shining light into dark places. When light comes, darkness cannot remain, and people see when before they could not.

Jesus proclaimed freedom for everyone who suffers. He was moved with compassion by all of the suffering that He saw, and then He acted in love. This is the year, and this is the time. This is what love looks like -- practically reaching out and helping another.

Dear Father, we ask for that same anointing that was on Jesus to be upon us. We are not satisfied with the status quo. We want to be more like You. We want to see the captives set free. We want to see the enslaved liberated, just like they were in Biblical days. You said that when we serve You, those kinds of things would happen. We want to see Your church, Your people, go into every dark area and shine light. We want to fulfill Your law of love by reaching out practically to all people, particularly to the vulnerable, the exploited, children and women, laborers enslaved in generational debt, and children forced to fight in war. Send a new measure of Your Holy Spirit upon us to reach out in new ways, with a new anointing to fulfill the law of Christ. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.





Sunday

Day of Rest

Please reflect on the past week and on what God has been teaching you so far during the Fast for Freedom.

NOT
FOR SALE

Monday- Day 29

Proverbs 31:8

Penelope R. Kim

The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the power of the spoken word. Isaac gives away Esau's birthright with a spoken blessing, Joshua and the Israelites take down the walls of Jericho with a mighty shout, David and the prophets urge the importance of singing God's praises, the Disciples won over 3,000 to Christianity after testifying in many languages on Pentecost, and Jesus promises that for those who acknowledge Him on earth, the same will be done in heaven. God imputes true power to our speech, for "out of the overflow of his heart [a man's] mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45).

John 1:1 refers to Jesus Himself as "the Word of God." This means that Jesus acts as God's very own heart. No speech need pass between them; God desires and Jesus acts. Likewise, when we so deeply interest ourselves in the plight of "the destitute," who have no voice of their own, we can become their word. Our compassion and concern can change things. Our interest for their issues can spur actions, however small, that alleviate suffering, or that move things in a better direction. Even a word of prayer opens the door to His power.

When we speak in the interest of the voiceless, we are showing that the concerns of our own heart are in accord with God's. If I am given a voice while another has none, then my voice is a gift from God, to be used by God. What better reward is there than to bring our voices and our actions into agreement with God so that He may be glorified?

"Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act." -- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Almighty God, my every breath, and any gift that I have, is from You. Show me the way to use my voice to help those who have no voice. Create opportunities for me to speak out for the rights of the destitute and give me the words to say, as You have promised. Move the hearts of those listening to action. Move me to have compassion for those whom You love. Use my voice and my life in whatever way You need to bring freedom and light to those bound in silence and darkness. I pray You would be glorified, Oh Lord, through the concerns of my heart and the words from my mouth. Amen.



Tuesday- Day 30

Revelation 21:4

Henry Voge

At the heart of the Biblical story is the problem of mankind's separation from God. Our Creator made us to be in community with Him, but our sin has brought division. Every book of the Bible is somehow about this problem. God himself fixed it by becoming an Israelite and living the way all men should live. He died the death that we deserve to die, and He rose to new life in order to free us from our bondage to sin.

We still live in sin and God's world is still broken. But since the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit has been on the move to make everything right. In Revelation 21, God concludes the Bible's central drama with a promise. Here on Earth, under the "old order of things," we cannot even look on God, but He says a time is coming when He will touch us and wipe away our tears. Just as our separation from God brought suffering, our unity with God will destroy it. "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (Revelation 21).

I cannot help but respond to this promise with incredulity—partly because I think that nothing so good could ever come true. But if I believe the story of Jesus, I know that God can accomplish impossibly good news.

I also have trouble trusting God's promise because it touches the most sensitive desire of my heart. I yearn for God's presence and the world's restoration. If I allow myself to believe Revelation 21:4, then I make myself vulnerable to be disappointed, so instead, I become cynical. I hear about the world's problems, and I say, "That's just the way things go."

In Revelation 21, God responds with, "That's the way things *used* to go. That was the old order of things. I am making all things new." If I want to make a difference in the world, I need to let myself believe God's words. I need to trust that He can do the impossible. Yes, we live in sin, and the world is broken. But God is on the move. He will make all things right. Can you believe that?

Lord, I live in the old order of things. But You have the power to make all things new. I confess that I do not believe Your promises. Teach me to trust You. Come, Lord, and make the world right. Amen.



Wednesday- Day 31

Psalm 140: 12-13

Christopher Plemmons

Those who pursue justice are mimicking the character of God. God is truly the one who can bring about perfect justice, and those who are working towards it here on the earth pursue something that God will distribute perfectly one day. Psalm 140 is the heart's cry for God to do justice upon the earth, to protect the poor from the violent, and to restore peace. This longing for justice finds its source in the gospel. The heart of the Christian gospel is the love God demonstrated by His death for the sin of mankind. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are those who "secure justice for the poor" (v.12). Without God, we are all unjust and lost because of our sin. But the death of Jesus is the beginning of God's love at work to secure justice for our sin. Jesus took the punishment for our sins. God gave Jesus the judgement that we deserved. The gospel, then, informs our view and pursuit of justice. His people pursue justice in anticipation of the Lord bringing all things to their just end.

Those who pursue this justice are not acting in vain, because though they fight discrimination, slavery, abuse, and every other selfish act that humans impose on another, they serve the Lord who has begun the establishment of perfect justice. The pursuit of justice is really just the heart acting out its longing for God to judge justly. This is why we praise Him. "Surely the righteous will praise your name" (v. 13) is stated as a fact. What Jesus accomplished in rising from death frees us to know God. Justice for our sin was meted out through the cross, and we praise God for seeking justice for us through it. We then pursue justice in this life out of praise to God for His great work. We worship Him because He is the perfect one, and we worship Him knowing that eventually He will rule over all with perfect justice.

Father, You are the High God, rightful ruler over all, the only perfect judge, and the one who wrought justice for us through Christ. May Your Spirit guide our hearts in humility and boldness. Tempered by Your love, may we mimic Your Spirit, desiring Your justice, fully knowing that You are both truly just and truly good. Amen.



Thursday- Day 32

Matthew 7:12

G. Stephen Goode

This is the heart of the Gospel. It reminds me of the Great Commandment – “Love God, and love your neighbors as you love yourself.” How did I love myself this morning?

Well, let’s see. I had a nice roof over my head. I had a warm bed to sleep in. I was safe. I took a shower, even used soap and shampoo. I drank some clean water. I listened to music. I read my Bible and did my homework. I exercised. I had breakfast. Brushed my teeth. And those are just a few examples. I was not raped, beaten, drugged or forced to work as a slave. I was not living in extreme poverty.

The Scripture is clear. Be towards your neighbor as you are towards yourself. Treat them with respect, dignity, trust, openness, and love. Seek to understand them before you are understood. Do not judge them, but give them the benefit of the doubt. Treat them as children in the image of God.

Dear Lord, it is easy to think of myself and not of other people, and yet Your model of living is to love others as we love ourselves. We fast today for those who do not have their daily bread. Help us to be an answer to their need. Help us to see others with Your eyes and not just through our own self-centered perspective. You didn’t stop at asking us to treat others as ourselves or to love others as ourselves; You asked us to love our enemies and to bless those who even say bad things about us or persecute us. You heard the cries of those enslaved and said that You would deliver them. As Your people, we want to be like You and to live as You did. We need Your Holy Spirit to help us to do that. We ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.



Friday- Day 33

Exodus 20:2

Leo Rhee

It is interesting that the Lord would make this statement just before He introduces the Ten Commandments: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." Why would He do that? Our God is a God who frees. The Ten Commandments were meant to bring freedom - not to bind people in a box of rules and legalism. However, many people misunderstand the concept of freedom. Freedom is not doing whatever one wants or living however one chooses to live. Actually, living in that kind of sin will enslave you. Ask any drug addict, prison inmate, alcoholic, or adulterer. In other words, freedom cannot be defined in the negative—as an absence of rules, confinement, and constraint. The Christian is not someone who has become free to sin, but someone who, by the grace of God, has become free *not* to sin. In fact, restraint and discipline is actually a means to liberation. There is a certain discipline involved in obeying God—that obedience will set you free to be holy and live free in Him. During my college years, I studied music before God called me into ministry. I admired those music students who had the discipline and tenacity to practice six hours a day, sometimes neglecting food and social life in pursuit of excellence. But the discipline and adherence to certain boundaries on their lives unleashed an ability that would otherwise go untapped. In other words, these music majors were able to be enter into a richer kind of freedom. Similarly, freedom is not so much the absence of restrictions as finding the right restrictions. Spiritual life is not a restriction or a straight jacket on life, but it unleashes the power to accomplish greater things. A fish free from the seemingly constraining boundaries of a body of water will eventually die.

Thousands of people worldwide are put in prison for their faith. Yet there is a freedom found in Christ that can never be bound or imprisoned. On the other hand, there are people free to do whatever they want, but they languish in the self-wrought prisons of their own captivity. God so badly wanted us to be free from the bondage of slavery that He sent His Great Emancipator, Jesus Christ, to die for us.

Precious Lord. There are still areas in my life where the Enemy has built strongholds of bondage. Free me from the chains of my own addictions and idolatries. I think about those in physical prisons all over the world. God, bring freedom to those in chains. Just as You brought the Israelites out of slavery, would You bring liberty to those imprisoned for their faith? Amen.



Saturday- Day 34

Gen. 18:19

Henry Voge

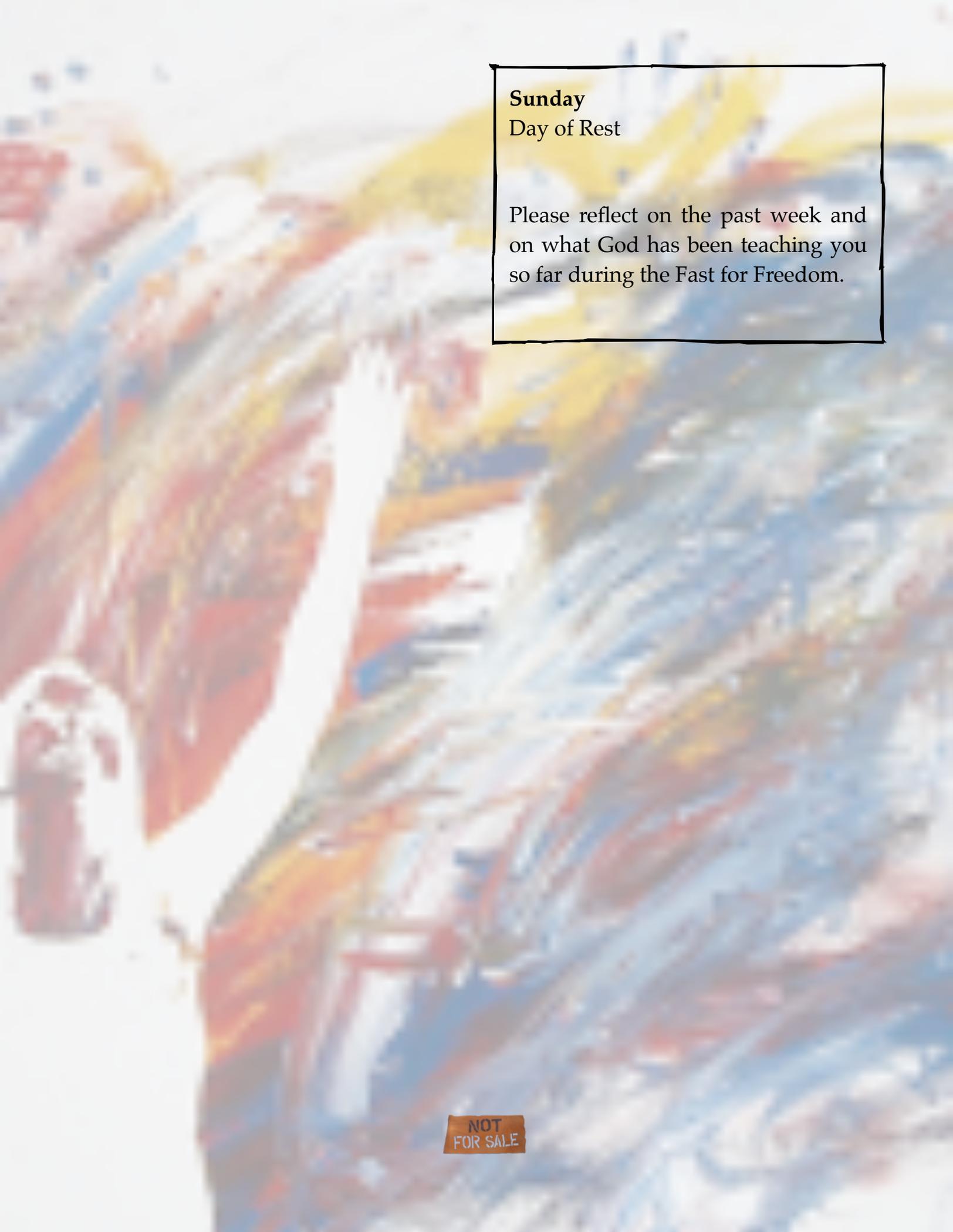
The Lord promised to make Abraham and his wife Sarah into a great nation that will bless all other nations. He says He will accomplish this promise not through the wealth, power, or worldly status of Abraham and his descendants, but through their righteousness and justice. Because they will follow the way of the LORD, they will bless the whole world. This promise is a challenge to all of God's people. We want to be great. We want to change the world. And here God has told us how to do it: we must pursue righteousness and justice. If we believed that our greatness lay not in our status but in our character, how would we behave differently? What would matter to us?

God's decree flies in the face of Abraham and Sarah's faithlessness. In chapter twelve, Abraham abandons his wife to the Egyptian pharaoh in order to save his own neck. In chapter twenty-one, Abraham forces a woman and her son to wander the desert in poverty. Abraham and Sarah's descendants are no better. They are proud, warring, and idolatrous. Their story is a history of sin. God foresees this history, and still He promises to build a great nation through Abraham. Why?

The answer comes thousands of years later when God himself becomes one of Abraham's descendants, and He proves what He tells Abraham in Genesis 18:19. He changes history and redeems mankind -- not by waging wars or by being popular but by perfectly pursuing good, even when it leads Him to a cross. Today, we can enter Jesus' story by pursuing justice. We can become the tools with which God builds His nation. The choice will demand sacrifice, and we will have our own crosses to bear. But like Jesus, we will find that our sacrifice brings new life to the world and to us.

Lord, You are king of this world. I confess that I have not followed You as I ought. I have sought status rather than righteousness. I have loved comfort rather than justice. Please reveal to me the ways that I can bring justice and peace to this world. Build up Your nation and bless the world through me. Thank you for Jesus' righteousness and sacrifice, and thank you that I can enter into His new life. I ask all of these things in His name. Amen.





Sunday

Day of Rest

Please reflect on the past week and on what God has been teaching you so far during the Fast for Freedom.

NOT
FOR SALE

Monday- Day 35

1 John 3:11-16

Hermann A. Kim

Human trafficking is a matter of life and death, and according to today's passage LOVE and HATE are its keys.

Love is the greatest commodity in our fight for justice, for it not only fuels but also sustains us in the midst of opposition. Today, we examine 1 John 3:11-16, verses about the war of love and hate, and its implications in God's eyes. Hatred is viewed as the same thing as murder while love is described as one laying down his or her life for another.

These both have consequences of either death or life. In this dark world, the misplacement of hatred and love has glorified injustice. Hating what we should love, such as life and purity, while loving what we should hate, such as sexual perversions and pride. We don't have to go far to find these equations are prevalent in our lives and the world.

The Bible says evil should not be overcome by evil but by good. We must reverse the curse of human trafficking by praying and living in an opposite lifestyle. The fight against lust is the love for purity, and the fight against hate is a lifestyle of love, shown by Christ who exemplified love when he sacrificed his life for us.

We say we want prostitution to end, yet we still struggle with lust. We say we want human trafficking to end, but live with hate. We must be willing to have God change us before we allow God to use us to change the world.

We will be hated when we move against the world's values and equations. So in our prayers, it is not only important that we live in accordance with love and purity (opposite to what we are fighting against), but that when we do fight for love and its principles that we are "armed" with the attitude of Christ (ref. 1 Peter 4).

Father, thank you for placing in my heart a hatred for the injustices of the world. I ask that with that same hatred of the injustices, You place in my heart a deeper hatred for sin and its effects. I ask that You would examine the areas where I have hated when I should have loved, or when I loved when I should have hated. Help me to fight on Your behalf for the causes of justice by first fighting against the sins in my own life that are the causes of these injustices. Grant me strength to love the unlovable and to hate what is loved by the world, and thereby to be a greater agent in this fight for freedom. May I learn from Your Son, Jesus, and learn to die to myself and to lay my life for others in the many ways you will prompt me today. In Your Son's name I pray. Amen.



Tuesday- Day 36

Psalm 44:1-3

Yohan Kim

Have you heard with your ears the deeds and works God has performed in they days of your forefathers'? Have you heard the freedom that was rung out for the slaves that were trapped but are now set free? I'm not talking about when slaves were set free in America during Abraham Lincoln's time. I'm talking about yesterday, the day before that, and the day before that -- when men, women and children were set free by the hands of God.

There is still a world where God's sheep are trapped inside a man-made hell. There is a world out there that still needs rescue. However, freedom for that world cannot be won by our hands. As the passage states, it was not man's power in weaponry, manpower, or physical strength that saved him, but it was the power of God that rescued them from their enemies. That same Power still exists today, right now, in this very moment, and it waits for us to call on Him to move. Our hands are not strong enough to defeat the enemies which trap and hold the nations and the peoples that are afflicted by the enemy, but the hands of Mighty God are stronger than any others, and His mighty hand can set us free -- and will set us free -- as we seek Him and become His delight.

Father, may we be a delight in Your eyes. Anything that isn't a delight, may it disappear from Your sights. May You vanquish all the evil that tries to exist in our midst under sheep skin, and may Your glory reign. I want Your people to cry out again and to be able to say that it was Your hand that rescued the trapped and enslaved when evil had other plans for them. God, may Your name reign. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



Wednesday- Day 37

James 1:27

Hank Voge

God wants disciples who follow His law, James says. He does not want a man “who listens to the word but does not do what it says” (James 1:23). He wants His disciples “to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep [themselves] from being polluted by the world” (vs. 27). Sometimes Scripture seems distant from my everyday life, but here, James’s words hit me dead-on.

James breaks down his definition of “pure and faultless” religion into two parts: the disciple’s impact on the world and the world’s impact on the disciple. In the first part, James asserts that the disciple must care for orphans and widows—in other words, for the victims in society. When I think of religion, I think of prayer, communion, and—I hate to say it—politics. But James says that I should think first of love. The reader may miss the force of James’s claim. He is saying that the best worship we can offer, the act that corresponds best to the heart of the universe, is to love our neighbors. Hearing this news, I recall the times I have seen someone in distress—a homeless stranger, a friend going through hard times, a brother in need. Most of the time, I prayed for God to help the person while I made no effort to help him myself. God forgive me. My religion is tarnished. If I do not attempt what I ask God to do, then my prayers are broken at best—and likely empty.

In the second part of his definition, James says that God’s disciple must keep himself “from being polluted by the world” (vs. 27). When I think of purifying myself, I dwell on my sins and how I can eliminate them. I focus on my problems. But James advises his reader to focus instead on God’s perfection. God’s disciple must look “intently into the perfect law,” and he must do what it says (vs. 25). The two parts of the definition intertwine here. By helping the orphan and the widow—by following God’s law—God’s disciple ingrains the law into his heart and shields himself from the world’s influence.

James also promises that obedience to God’s law will give God’s disciple “freedom” (vs. 25). James does not clarify this claim, but I think he must mean—at least in part—that obedience to God offers freedom from sin’s bondage. Of course, I will never obey God’s law fully on Earth (I am too sinful), so on my own power, I will never be free from sin. Jesus’ perfect obedience, however, covers my imperfection because of his sacrificial death and resurrection. He alone practiced “pure and faultless” religion, and what can I do but give thanks and follow his lead? I will not be perfect at it (not in this life), but still, as I practice the pure religion that James describes, I feel the beginnings of my freedom. What a beautiful story. As I work to free others, God frees me as well.

Lord, I confess that I do not offer you pure and faultless religion. I do not love my neighbor or Your law as I should. Have mercy on me, Father. May I rejoice every day in a growing sense of my freedom from sin. And thank you for Your Son, who practiced perfect religion that I might share in its blessings. In His name, Amen.



Thursday- Day 38

Isaiah 61:1-4

Kristen Carr

I remember the first time I read those words from Isaiah. My heart pounded so hard, I thought it might fall out of my chest. Hope. Healing. Freedom. Forgiveness. Beauty where there was once brokenness. Joy where sorrow's tears once rained like a flood. Adoration and praise where despair once immobilized. If I reacted like this after hearing these words, can you imagine how the people in the Old and New Testament time reacted? Here's what I mean.

During the very moments Isaiah first spoke these words of prophecy, a large portion of God's people, the Israelite nation, was held captive by Assyria. But this was not new. The Israelites were in almost constant captivity. They would listen to the Lord and His instruction for a while, but selfish desire and seemingly "greener pastures" always showed up. Pursuing their desire for these things would lead God's people down miserable paths that inevitably landed them far from the God who loved them and close to captors who hated them. Imagine how these people felt when they heard this prophecy from Isaiah proclaiming hope for justice and freedom, a time to come of peace, healing, and jubilee. Imagine how their hearts must have pounded.

Fast-forward to the New Testament book of Luke where Jesus is speaking in the town of Nazareth at a local synagogue. The Israelite people are once again captives, this time to Rome. As Jesus is speaking in Luke 4, he quotes the words of prophecy from Isaiah 61, speaking words of hope for those held captive, and then in verse 21 says, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Wow. To those who were listening with understanding that day, how their hearts must have pounded. They heard the unbelievable news loud and clear. Isaiah spoke of hope, healing, and freedom that was to come. Jesus said the wait was over. He had come to see freedom, hope, and justice fulfilled. Heck, yes.

Lord, may our hearts pound with calling and excitement as we realize the authority You have given us to speak freedom over those who are held captive to sin or to people who are in sin. May we allow that pounding to propel us forward in bringing beauty where there has long been ashes. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Friday- Day 39

Galatians 5:1

Natalie Wartew

A couple of years ago, a friend sent me a greetings card printed with the verse: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1). I was familiar with these words and had read them before in the context of the book of Galatians. However, reading them in isolation actually made me laugh. It sounded obvious that the purpose of being set "free" should be for "freedom". It would be absurd to set someone free for the purpose of bondage or captivity — it doesn't make sense.

Although Paul is referring in this passage to spiritual freedom, he also gives us a picture of physical freedom. Christ came to earth to set us free in order that we might experience His freedom. And He wants all people to have access to the spiritual and physical freedom that is available to us through the finished work of Jesus Christ. With this knowledge, we can confidently tackle the problem of modern-day slavery, knowing that we are praying and acting in accordance with God's will.

These truths lay the foundation for the role of the Church in the abolitionist movement. It is our responsibility to "stand firm" and to fight for the freedom of others using the freedom we ourselves have received.

Jesus, thank you for Your obedience to the Father - that because of Your death we can live in Your Freedom. Please show us what we can do to help bring Your physical and spiritual freedom to others who continue to live under the "yoke of slavery". Amen.



Saturday- Day 40

John 13:34-35

Allan Theobald

There may be nothing more challenging than to love one another as Jesus loved us. We cannot ignore John's focus, especially as we live in a culture that hijacks love and replaces it with lust, and romantic self-sucking feelings, rather than other-oriented choices of faithfulness. It is John who tells us that "God is love" (1 John 4:8) and that "we know what love is by Jesus' laying down his life for us" (1 John 3:16). It is John that tells us, "greater love has no one than to lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). In a society full of broken relationships, and in a world where those who should love us regularly hurt us, it is imperative that we know and experience what real love looks like. According to Scripture, love looks like Jesus crucified. Nothing else is more powerful, nothing else more loving than the sacrifice of Jesus. That love disregards feelings. That love is unconditional. That love expects nothing in return, and that love is always unconditional; it is agape love.

And it is because of this that John tells us that if we don't love one another, we don't know God (1 John 4:20). How are we supposed to love each other? There is only one answer: the cross. Jesus tells us to deny ourselves and to pick up our cross. So for us to love one another like Jesus, we have to engage in a lifestyle of sacrifice and put others first. We must make time for the broken and the hurting. We must be willing to love others - even without reward. Loving others as Jesus did means being willing to be hurt.

I think loving each other with cross love can be summarized by loving with our sweat, tears, and blood. Calvary love will demand our energy, our hearts, and our lives. It's not enough just to care about injustice, poverty, or others' pain. Cross love willingly embraces and shares the pain, sorrow, and injustice around the world, announcing that God's people have value and potential in the midst of brutality and ugliness. Calvary love forces us to touch the dirty, gritty, and unclean so that light may penetrate the darkness.

Where does this start? It begins with sharing Calvary love with our own brothers and sisters. The Church is the community who should be known for their reckless, radical, unconditional love. John tells us that people will know we follow Jesus by our love for one another. The core of our witness and ability to establish His kingdom on this earth is linked to how well we love. The Scripture says we are salt to the earth (Matt 5:13); the flavor of that salt is Calvary love. Without it, we are good for nothing.

Father, thank you for Your Calvary love poured out on us. Fill us with the love of Christ, the cross-carrying, sacrificial love of Your son. May our calluses be shed from our hearts as we are given a fresh vision of Your love for us. Cultivate in us a sensitivity and brokenness that ignites an all-consuming passion for Your kingdom. Father, by Your Spirit, enable us to carry our cross well, to love You well, and to love each other with the same love You shared with us. Free us from any cheap imitations of love that require little sacrifice from us. As we love like You, may our lives bring healing, freedom, and justice to the broken, dying, and hurting. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Resurrection Sunday (Easter)

Christ is Risen!

Those words are now echoing across the world. The crucified and risen savior is “risen with healing in his wings.” Healing for a broken world. Freedom for the captives. Joy and power combined in death conquering action.

Now it’s our turn.

We live in the power of the resurrection.

We take the joy, the hope, the freedom, and healing out into a deeply fractured world and, partnering with God, create new futures. We do this by speaking kind words and living radically committed lives to God’s kingdom. We do this by engaging in smart activism.

See the next page for next steps in engaging in smart activism with Not For Sale.

Rev. Kevin Austin

Director of the Abolitionist Faith Community

Not For Sale



Action Guide

The contemplative life of the Christian is naturally stirred to action. Having spent time with God - listening, learning, and resting – we then follow God into the world. Spiritual disciplines prepare us for intentional and meaningful engagement.

First, we steadfastly pray for the end of slavery.
Then, we labor in, with, and through Christ's love to create new futures.
Prayer-filled, hope-infused actions can include these:

Give a minute, give an hour, or give a lifetime. Find out how to give of yourselves through [EMPOWER](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/empower) (www.notforsalecampaign.org/empower).

Partner with others through your local [COMMUNITY ABOLITIONIST NETWORK](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/CAN) (www.notforsalecampaign.org/CAN).

Attend a week-long course and become trained in smart activism, citizen investigation, and consumer advocacy at the [ACADEMY](http://www.nfsacademy.org) (www.nfsacademy.org).

Spend money in the direction of freedom by downloading and using the [FREE2WORK](http://www.free2work.org) (www.free2work.org) app and by purchasing items that directly support survivors through the [FREEDOM STORE](http://www.notforsalestore.org). (www.notforsalestore.org)

Use your athletic skills or creative art skills to help people see the hope of change through [FREE2PLAY](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/action/athlete/) (www.notforsalecampaign.org/action/athlete/).

Partner with Not For Sale around the globe with our [INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/global-initiatives) (www.notforsalecampaign.org/global-initiatives).

Support the work of Not For Sale financially by giving through [FAST FOR FREEDOM](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/donate) (or [\\$28 TO EMANCIPATE](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/donate)) (www.notforsalecampaign.org/donate).

Attend a [TOUR](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/tour) stop (www.notforsalecampaign.org/tour) -- filled with workshops, speakers, and musicians dedicated to ending slavery.

There is no end to the things we can do to end modern-day slavery and create new futures. Not For Sale is innovative in finding new ways to engage regularly, so please check out more ways to participate by going to www.notforsalecampaign.org. Do something every day. Pray it forward. Pay it forward. Engage in smart, hope-infused activism.

Thank you for partnering with Not For Sale.



Contributors

Main Contributors:

Rev. Kevin Austin; Director of the Abolitionist Faith Community at Not For Sale; U.S. Missionary with the Free Methodist Church.

Pastor Eddie Byun; Lead pastor of Onnuri English Ministry, Seoul, Korea; Professor at Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology; Founder of HOPE Be Restored ministries; Director of Not For Sale Korea.

Devotional Contributors:

Rev. Kevin Austin

Richard Biggs

Pastor Eddie Byun

Kristen Carr

Sherry Carroll

Evelyn Chang

Peter Cho

Jennifer Chun

G. Stephen Goode

Estella J. Kang

Hermann Kim

Penelope Kim

Yohan Kim

Lauren McCall

Mandolyn Orrell

Christopher Plemmons

Leo Rhee

Charity Ruth Stevens

Allan Theobald

Bishop Matt Thomas

Katie Valentine

Mark Van Valin

Hank Voge

Natalie Wartew

Action Guide:

Rev. Kevin Austin

Editors:

Mandolyn Orrell

Keturah Scott

Christy Sobolik

Hank Voge

Cover Art:

Jennifer Chun

Format, Layout, and Design:

Mandolyn Orrell

