

Freedom is about Many Things (Exodus 5:1-6:8)

Video 2

We think we're free. The Bible says: without God, you're a slave, spiritually.

How so?

You may not have Pharaoh physically standing over you. You may think you're answerable to no-one. Yet, if God isn't your master, you'll just turn to other masters instead.

Let's explore this idea further.

We may think we're free as we devote our lives to being popular, or to living ethically, or to making the grade, or to having fun.

But something always happens when we live for these things.

They begin to master us.

After all: if being popular is what we're living for, what happens when we're not popular? If achieving is what we're living for, then what happens when we fail?

Our inner master – our inner Pharaoh – starts to crack the whip. It tells us to work harder. Do better! Be kinder! Get thinner! Be funnier!

Then when we fail, this voice comes back: **Lazy, that's what you are – lazy!**

So the process restarts. We double our efforts, we fail again, and the voice of our inner master returns.

We may tell ourselves that we can walk away – but we can't. Because we're slaves.

We're slaves to things that promised freedom but have become slavedrivers.

But here's the key.

God's word to Moses is different. God is our master. But unlike Pharaoh who says, "You must", God says, **"I will."** He says it to Moses seven times!

God doesn't make demands. Instead, he makes promises.

And here is his greatest of them all:

I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God.

God says: he himself will secure his people's freedom.

Jesus took this promise up when he declared:

If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Slaves can't free themselves. But Jesus can.

As he dies, he takes our judgement and offers us his perfect record. We can be secure – not because of what we do, but because of what Jesus gives.

And, as that truth hits home, you can slowly silence your critical inner Pharaoh.

Be quiet! I am free! I don't need to prove myself. I am living for a master who has given himself for me. And his intentions for me are only ever kind.

Every follower of Jesus has this freedom story. And this is why followers of Jesus are passionate about freedom in all its forms.

We're passionate about spiritual freedom. We long to lead our friends and family to the only Master who won't dominate us.

But we're passionate about other forms of freedom too. We care about and contend for people enslaved politically, economically and socially.

Did you know that it was the heart of God seen in Exodus that inspired William Wilberforce to end transatlantic slavery? It also inspired the American Civil Rights movement.

And it can inspire us too.

We live in a time in which slavery thrives. Millions of vulnerable people are trafficked across the globe. Women are oppressed, the poor are exploited, billions are denied basic freedoms.

Here in the UK, many people are enslaved to pornography. Others are enslaved to drugs that promised freedom but which bring them only sadness.

Each of them mirrors what, spiritually-speaking, we once were.

Slavery will be with us until Jesus returns. Yet when we loosen chains in Jesus' name, we offer the world a glimpse of its future.

And we invite the world to see the only kind master. The one who gathers the weary and heavy-laden and gives them rest.