

Cry Freedom – Series Introduction

I've been thinking of what our sermon or preaching series should be for the month of May starting next Sunday. I've just been thinking about that, but I'd like to suggest a series that I'm going to call "Cry freedom".

I read this story this week that I just wanted to share with you; this account is set soon after the Second World War. And there was a stateless man, in other words no country would accept him as a resident and as a citizen, and give him a passport and allow him to have their nationality. This stateless man was named Nic (N-I-C) and he had been wrongly imprisoned by the allied forces who were occupying Japan straight after the Second World War. After several years alone in a brutal prison he receives a visit from a CIA Spy who wants to recruit him for a dangerous mission. The Spy says he has come to offer Nic his freedom, but Nic's reply is very very significant. He says to the man who's trying to recruit him: "I have my freedom, you mean that you've come to give me my Liberty."

It's easy to confuse these two ideas: the idea of freedom, and the idea of Liberty. We usually associate freedom with our external circumstances but that's actually misleading. For Nic freedom was a state of mind and a state of attitude. Even though his liberty was severely restricted by a prison cell and by an unjust system. In the Bible, we see the true freedom is a state of mind and attitude; but ultimately it's something much more: it's freedom to have a relationship with God. Or to put it another way, it's freedom to enjoy all the blessings that God wants us to have.

Although a person's liberty may be restricted by particular circumstances as our liberty is restricted the moment because of lock down. But despite that restriction of freedoms, we can still enjoy the real freedom of relationship with Christ.

So I'd like to look for the next month at some chapters from the book of Exodus. At the time that Exodus begins the Israelites had become slaves in Egypt. The good relationship that the nomadic Israelites had enjoyed with the Pharaoh at the time of Joseph, those times had long gone; a new Pharaoh had come in and this new Pharaoh, probably a number of new Pharaohs had come and gone since then, and this new Pharaoh saw the Israelites as a threat and crushed their spirit by turning them into slaves. Their liberty had been severely restricted and they cried out to God to give them liberty, but God wants to give them so much more than simply physical liberty, or physical freedom; God wants them to experience a freedom beyond their dreams, a freedom promised centuries earlier through their forefather, Abraham.

So for the next four weeks from next Sunday onwards, we're going to be looking at some chapters from Exodus, as we start by looking at Moses, in his birth and the circumstances of that, going through looking at how God worked out his freedom plans, his plans of salvation for the children of Israel.