

Week beginning: 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

Worship series: #8 in series **THE POWER IN THE MOMENT**

living sharing growing



**lifegroups**  
live life abundantly

### Theme Verse

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

Acts 16:30-31

### Remember One Thing

Only grace can unloose you from the chains of sin that bind you.

Only grace can free you

from the expectations of others that enslave you.

Only grace can save you from the shackles of death that hold you.

Only grace can heal you from the wounds that hurt and scar you.

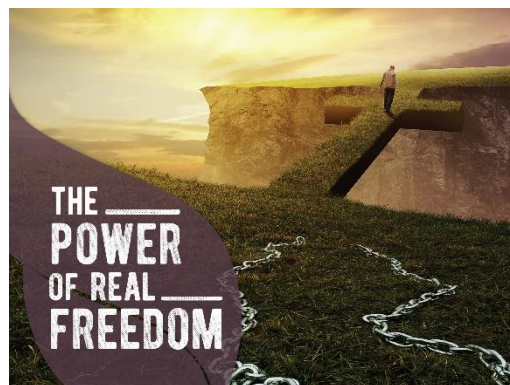
When you have experienced that grace,  
you will know the power of real freedom.

A power to live fully and love extravagantly

A power to share boldly and serve selflessly

A power to grow purposefully and to praise unceasingly

That's real freedom. And it's yours in Christ alone.



enter



**The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners (Isaiah 61:1)**

Heavenly Father, in your Son Jesus, you have come to give us freedom from all that enslaves us so that we can live fully as the people you have made us to be. As we gather in your presence, come and speak your Word into our hearts - where we are bound but don't know it, show us those chains. Where we are enslaved by the shackles of Satan or life, reveal your grace which alone can give real freedom, a freedom to live, to love, to serve and to praise. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

share



1. *Highs and lows for the week.*
2. *Accountability time. How did you go with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *What time of day are you at your best? Worst? Why?*
4. *Midnight is not just the clock ticking over to the darkest time of the night, it represents the time you are in the waiting room while a child/spouse is in surgery. Midnight is when the tests come back & reveal the worst case outcome. Midnight is when you are staring at a bill you can't pay. Midnight is when you ask yourself if anyone would notice if you just didn't show up anymore. Share a dark or 'midnight' experience in your life? How did you get through it?*

It's right there in our national anthem:

*'Australians all let us rejoice, for we are young and free...'*

And after singing it with gusto, we go home, lock our security screens, deadbolt our doors; and refuse to answer the door to anyone after 8pm! Rather than living free, our lives often feel more like a prison, falling well short of the freedom that we desperately crave. Today we discover the power of real freedom; a freedom that can put a song in your heart and hope in your voice, even in the darkest night, times of bondage or circumstances that have your feet shackled or souls chained to sorrow. It's a freedom you can't buy or earn, just receive. But it has the power to change everything,

listen



Read Acts 16:16-40



5. *What stands out/speaks to you in the text that you have just read? Explain.*
6. *The irony of this text is those who think they are free, are actually enslaved and those who are shackled are free. Explore each of the characters in the story – the slave girl, the owners, Paul and Silas, the magistrates, the jailor and discuss the ways in which they are free and the ways in which they are enslaved?*
7. *What enables Paul and Silas to praise and worship God at the darkest of times? How easily have you been able to praise and worship in the midnight times of your life?*
8. *'Faith leads to praise and praise leads to peace. Praise married to peace opens the door to proclamation.' To what extent have you experienced the truth of that statement, whether fully or in part?*

Paul clearly understands that if the open door for him meant a closed door for the Philippian jailer, the door was really closed to both of them. An incredible and compassionate insight on Paul's part. A compassion that moves beyond individualistic wants and comforts--even possibilities of individual freedom—to make a connection with another human being, to serve another person.

9. *To what degree is the freedom of the individual more important than the freedom of community in our society today? Why do you think that is?*
10. *What do you think was so compelling about what the jailer witnessed, that led him to ask, 'Sir, what must I do to be saved?'*
11. *What can you learn from that about the witness of your life?*

The word for saved in the Greek is *sōdzō*, which is best translated freed. The jailer is asking, 'What must I do to be free?' Or 'what must I do to be rescued? Paul tells him that there is only one place to find real freedom from all that binds, enslaves and chains us in this world. There is only one person who can give real freedom. Jesus Christ. Luther reminds us in the explanation of the second article of the Apostles' Creed:

**At great cost, he has saved and redeemed me, a lost and condemned person. He has freed me from sin, death, and the power of the devil, not with silver or gold, but with his holy and precious blood and his innocent suffering and death. All this he has done that I may be his own, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness...**

The gospel found you when you were lost, the gospel has freed you when you were chained and shackled. The gospel has changed you when you couldn't change yourself, the gospel has pulled you back from the brink of death and has given you a new life in the waters of baptism that you not only have right now, but will enjoy for the rest of eternity;

12. *What evidence of that new life, of the Gospel at work, do you see in the life of the jailer?*
13. *'If the Son, sets you free, you will be free indeed.' (John 8:36) How is the freedom that you have in Christ displayed in your own life or what stops it being evident?*



St. Augustine once said,

**"True freedom is not choice or lack of constraint, but being what you are meant to be."**

As humans created in the image of God, real freedom is not found in moving away from that image but only in living it out. The closer we conform to the true image of God, Jesus Christ, the freer we become. The farther we drift from it, the more our freedom shrinks.

14. *What is one step you will take in your own life this week to more fully live in the freedom that you have received, to live in the image of Christ? Share with the group.*



- Praise God for freeing you from the bondage of sin. Thank Jesus that he became a slave so that you could free to live, to praise and to serve every day of your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to freely share all you are and all you have so others may know real freedom in Jesus.
- Pray for those who are enslaved in sin, guilt, regret or other burdens of life that shackle them from living fully.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit may fill you with voices to praise, worship and sing in the darkest of times because you know the freedom you have in Jesus Christ, a freedom that cannot ever be taken away.



Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

**"Name, may you live in the freedom that Christ has given you. Amen."**