

WRU Christian Ethics and Social Action
Values Day 2024 – Freedom

Hymns & Worship Songs Suggestions

- Lord, we long for you to move in power (Heal our Nation) Mission Praise 448
- I will speak out
- There's a lot of pain (MP 1114)
- Lord for the years (MP 428)
- Lord, the clouds are gathering (MP 766)
- Facing a task unfinished (MP 126) There is a chorus to this that might not be in your hymn book but its available on line)
- For all the saints (MP 148)

Sermon Outline / Bible Study on Freedom

What is Freedom and do we really want it?

Think of a family going out to a restaurant.....

- **The dad** wants the freedom to choose the most expensive stake.
- **The son (16)** wanted the freedom to stay at home.
- **The daughter (12)** wants the freedom to keep her headphones on and message her friends on her phone.
- **The Grandma** wants Fish and Chips and to talk with her grandchildren.
- **The Grandad** thinks freedom of choice is overrated and just wants to be told where he's sitting and what he's having to eat.
- **The mother** wants everyone to have a lovely time together, and would like the freedom to drink wine at the meal, but is the designated driver for her parents.

If you were at this meal, what would you want to be free to do?

Who is free?

- Some people want the freedom to take drugs?
 - Others feel trapped and controlled by drugs, alcohol and or relationships they can't escape from.
- Some would love to be free from poverty.
 - Others feel trapped by very long working hours and stress from the job. They are well paid, but get very little time with their family, and when they do they are grump and tired.
- Some want freedom to wear what they want.
 - But they are actually unaware of the peer and marketing pressure they are under to keep up with the latest fashions, and remain 'in' and 'accepted/favoured' by the social group.

Bible reading John 8:31-59

³⁴ Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the **family, but a son belongs to it forever.** ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Jesus had said "the truth will set you free" and the Jews answered "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

Jesus goes on to say, freedom from tradition, ancestry, sin and expectation is found in a relationship with Him and His Father. Freedom to do "what is right" is greater freedom than doing what you want. Freedom to be honest.

Paul and Silas in the jail in Philippi - Acts 16:25-34

1. What kind of freedom did Paul and Silas find in the Philippian Jail?
2. What did they do with that freedom? What did they not do?
3. What kind of freedom did the Jailer find?

The Parable of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32

1. What kind of “freedom” did the younger brother want?
 - a. How did this make him behave?
 - b. How did he lose his “freedom”? What did he need to have “freedom” on his terms?
2. What restrictions did the older brother resent?
 - a. Who placed this restriction on him?
 - b. How did this make him behave?
 - c. What conditions was the older brother demanding to be able to live freely at home?
3. What did the younger brother find at home that gave him true freedom?

A suggested responsive prayer for Values Day¹

(Congregational Responses in **bold** type)

Father God, we thank you that we are able to worship here today in your presence. We pray that we might be aware of your peace and rejoice in your abiding love and mighty power.

We give thanks for those who have sustained us through their prayers, interceding on our behalf and for those who have gone before us, securing our freedom to meet together, and to speak freely of you.

We ask you to bless and guide us and all those concerned for the freedom of speech, particularly in proclaiming your Gospel, in this country and around the world.

We thank you for our Royal Family and our government, national and local. We pray that our leaders will uphold religious freedoms in our country, particularly those that allow us to speak your word and to speak out against anything that would restrict such freedoms. We pray for Christians in government, that they would serve their country with discernment and wisdom, and in your love.

May the Word of God’s wisdom and love speak to our hearts and minds.

We give thanks for all Christians involved in education. We pray for schools, colleges, and universities, for teachers and helpers, and for those who set the curriculum. We pray especially for the teaching of Religious Education in schools, that children will be taught the things of God.

We give thanks for those who work in communication, in broadcasting and the press. We pray for the correct portrayal of Christians on TV and in the press, whether printed or online. We pray for the freedom of the press and freedom of speech for all people.

May the Word of God’s wisdom and love speak to our hearts and minds.

We thank you for organisations around the world who seek to uphold religious freedoms. For instance Open Doors International. We pray that they would be able to continue working in countries where religious freedom is severely restricted. And that their ministry in this country, of alerting people to problems overseas, would continue and flourish as more people join them in prayer.

May the Word of God’s wisdom and love speak to our hearts and minds.

¹ Adapted from The Complete Themed Intercessions. David Adam

We thank you for those who have the gift of speaking and preaching in public places, such as Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park, or in town centres around the country. We pray that they will be allowed the freedom to speak and preach your Word. We pray for organisations such as Open Air Mission, and Beach Missions.

Grant them courage and patience Lord, as they encounter opposition.

May the Word of God's wisdom and love speak to our hearts and minds.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **AMEN**