

## “Freedom : Jubilee” – Leviticus 25:1-17

### Freedom offered

#### Ppt 1-debt

##### **What debts do you have?**

Imagine they're gone. Mortgage. Gone. Credit card bill. Gone. Car loan. Gone.

Imagine you had to sell your house to pay a huge medical bill - and then your house was given back to you. Imagine you lived in a place where you were so poor, you had to sell yourself into slavery just to feed your family. And then one day, you were set free.

What would that feel like?

#### Ppt 2-freedom

God's people were slaves under a cruel Pharaoh in Egypt for hundreds of years, then God sent Moses to lead them to freedom. Now, as they're hearing these words in Leviticus from Moses, they're in the middle of 40 years of wandering in the wilderness while God prepares them to enter "The promised land". Canaan. A land of freedom where they could live under God's rule.

This is just like OUR situation today!

First, We've been set free from slavery - to sin, through Jesus' death.

And now, today, we're wandering through the wilderness - of life,

Waiting to enter the promised land - of heaven.

What does that feel like? Knowing that you've been set free. Knowing that you're waiting to enter the promised land? That's what Israel are thinking about. And that's what WE should be thinking about as Christians, set free from sin and waiting to enter heaven.

Leviticus 25 is about freedom and a celebration called the year of Jubilee.

#### Ppt 3-7 days rest, 7 years rest, 7 x 7 years-freedom

So God's people were going to live in the Promised Land. As we heard last week, they were supposed to work for 6 years, but **every 7<sup>th</sup> year**, was a Sabbath year of rest. And God said he would make sure there was plenty for them to eat. They just had to rest and trust him. Just like in the wilderness when they had to depend on God dropping manna/food from the sky. There were no farms. No crops. No storage barns. They lived day by day from God's hand.

Could you live like that? No food in the fridge. No money in the bank. No back up plan for feeding your family except food appearing at your door each morning. Like lite and easy. Imagine that!

But THEN, after 7 lots of Sabbath years had passed – that's 7 lots of 7 years – 49 years – there was to be a **special** Sabbath – the 50<sup>th</sup> year – called the Jubilee. This was a HUGE year – it was also a year of complete rest, but on top of that, in the year of Jubilee, the 50<sup>th</sup> year, **ALL debts were to be cancelled.**

Money debts had to be cancelled. If you sold your house or farm to pay a debt, it had to be returned to you in the jubilee year. If you sold yourself into slavery to pay a debt, you had to be released from slavery in the jubilee year.

The jubilee year was like a big reset button. Every debt cancelled.

It was a year to remind Israel that **God** is the owner of the land. Israel were only custodians. Jubilee meant that no one could accumulate vast amounts of real estate and dominate over others. The rich could not get richer, because every 50 years, everything was returned to the original owners.

## Debt paid

### Ppt 4-day of atonement

Now, what's interesting about this Jubilee year is that it started on a day called "The Day of Atonement"

The Day of Atonement actually happened **every** year. On that day, a sacrifice was made to "atone" for the sins of the people. It was a sacrifice to symbolise PAYMENT for sin. A payment of blood. A goat was slaughtered and its blood was sprinkled on the altar.

It was a symbolic sacrifice that reminded Israel that sin is serious and that God is holy. The animal had to die and its blood was shed as a symbol of the serious nature of the consequences of sin. The atonement sacrifice symbolised freedom - the removal of sin. Freedom from sin. Freedom from debt.

And this is what the jubilee year was all about. Freedom. Freedom from our debt to God because of our sin. And a complete dependence on God to provide all our needs. Freedom and dependence.

There were three problems with this system though. First, the Day of Atonement had to happen **EVERY YEAR**. Second, they only got to rest every **7 years**. And third, their debts were only cancelled every **50 years**. Like most things we see in the Old Testament, the feasts we heard about last week, the Day of Atonement, the Sabbath year of Rest and the Jubilee year - these were all **TEMPORARY** things.

Until Jesus. Turn with me in your Bibles to Luke 4. Page...

In Luke chapter 4:18-21, Jesus is standing in a Jewish synagogue, and he takes out a scroll – a section from the book of Isaiah, from the Old Testament - and starts reading it:

### Ppt 5-Luke 4

*<sup>18</sup>"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to release the oppressed,  
<sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*

*<sup>20</sup>Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, <sup>21</sup>and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

**Jesus** came to bring us the final Jubilee. He announces himself as the one who brings the **final** jubilee. Good news for the poor. Freedom for the prisoners. Release for the oppressed. The year of the Lord's favour. Jesus' sacrifice is the **final** sacrifice.

### Ppt 6-Hebrews 7

Hebrews 7:27 says this about Jesus:

*"Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins **once for all** when he offered himself."*

Jesus was the once for all final sacrifice to bring in the final jubilee of rest forever. Sins are paid for once for all.

So how do we respond?

1. First, we need to recognise that we have sinned against God and we deserve death. We need to acknowledge the debt of our sin.
2. Second, we need true repentance - we need to turn away from our sin.

### **Ppt 7-broken window**

**III** - As children, we probably all broke things. A vase. A window. A glass or plate in the kitchen. What's the worst thing you've ever broken?!?...

As a child, sometimes you don't understand the value of what you've broken. Like the story I heard the other day about the 3 year old girl who decided to draw a nice picture for mum. With a rock. On the back panel of their car. She didn't realise the value of the car, or the damage she had done.

Sometimes, as God's children, we don't really understand the damage we do to our relationship with God with our sin. We often don't realise what we've broken. This was the problem the Israelites faced, and it's the problem we face. God wants us to come to terms with the seriousness of sin, and he wants to give us freedom from that. But we can only have that freedom if we recognise and admit our sin, and repent, turn away, from it.

### **Holding on to debt**

#### **Ppt 8-**

Holding your own debt

Holding debts against others

But there are two ways we often find ourselves trapped.

1. First, we can hold onto our own debt instead of letting Jesus pay our debt. **If you have not accepted Jesus as Lord, then you have not accepted his sacrifice for your sin and you have not been forgiven. Jesus has not paid your debt. You are not free, and you will pay for your own sin.** Let me encourage you, if that is your situation, **accept him today**. He WANTS you to accept his payment for your sin so you can be free. Do not be trapped any longer. Pray with me today. If you have any doubts, if any sin is tripping you up, or if you're just having trouble accepting his forgiveness, don't go home until you've talked it through.
2. The other trap is to accept Jesus' forgiveness for yourself, but to hold debts against others. This is not freedom. God calls us to forgive others. To cancel debts against others, just as he's cancelled our debts. That's not always easy, but forgiveness is something we must not only accept from God, but something we need to be able to freely give.

Leviticus is a book preparing God's people for entering the promised land of Canaan. A land of freedom. A land of rest. And it can help us too as we prepare to enter heaven - our promised land of rest and freedom.

God wants us to know the freedom of having our sins forgiven, of having no debts hanging over our head. He wants us to know what it's like to live in rest. And he wants us to share that rest and peace with others.

If you have not experienced that freedom, or if you're having trouble extending that freedom to other people, let me help you sort that out today. Holding onto sin - either our own sin or others' sin, is a damaging way to live. And through Jesus, we have a way, today, to deal with that sin and find freedom. It's not easy, but it is possible to start today.

(Move to room during last song?)

