

Life Group Notes 1/21/2024
Pastor Mark Warren The Road to Freedom Week

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 1/21. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. The footnotes at the end are not meant to distract but to clarify and enhance your understanding. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On life "...more abundantly..."](#)
2. [A brief review of the history of the offspring of Israel.](#)
3. [On dealing "shrewdly" with the children of Israel.](#)
4. [On the Hebrew midwives.](#)
5. [On bond slaves in the New Testament.](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

What did you think watching the missions video prayer for Malaysia? What do you know of Malaysia?

Pastor Mark opened prophesying a touch of God for those of us who have been going through real trials in these last weeks or months. Take the time to pray for one another now, and that the Holy Spirit, through your meeting together, will fulfill that promise.

Mark's new series is called The Journey to Freedom. He opens with the question, "What if I told you that you have bondage in your life that you don't know about, would you believe me?" Answer him. "Do you realize that you have a bounty on your head. Somebody is out to get you. They want to kill you. They want to destroy you. They want to take away your freedom."

1. Explain.
2. How does that make you feel?
3. What does guilt, real or imagined, do to any sense of freedom?
4. How seriously do these enemies take their mission?
5. How serious is your response to their threat? Who wins?

6. What steps have you taken to protect yourself and your family from these threats?

Review John 10: [9](#) I am the gate. If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. [10](#) [The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.](#)

1. What does "...life...more abundantly..." look like to you? (See [footnote 1](#))
2. What have you thought of this abundant life?
3. Have you seen it? Do you have a testimony...a before/after story?
4. Describe the battle Jesus warns us of in verse 10? Is it spiritual? Can it be physical?

See [footnote 2](#) below for a history of the offspring of Israel, where this story begins. Pastor says, "Joseph is dead, but his descendants and all the descendants of Israel are making Egypt a little nervous. I want you to see what happens when a people become threatened. I want you to think about this word 'power.' I want you to think about this word 'freedom.' Think about how 'freedom' and 'power' are intertwined. I want you to see that when there is an exchange of power there is freedom gained, or freedom lost."

1. Why does Egypt get nervous?
2. What is threatened by Israel's success and increasing numbers?
3. Who is threatened by Israel's success? Anyone else?
4. What power is inherent in freedom?
5. What power is lost when freedom is restricted?

Now look at Exodus 1: [8](#) *Then a new king, who did not know Joseph, came to power in Egypt. [9](#) "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become too numerous and too powerful for us. [10](#) Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase even more; and if a war breaks out, they may join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country."* (scribe's note: or "...and take over the country...")

1. What is the threat Israel imposes?
2. Why?
3. See [footnote 3 below](#). What is the root meaning of "shrewdly"? Pastor translates "wisely" saying, "In other words, 'How are we going to deceive them? How are we going to trick them? How are we going to suppress them? How are we going to take power away from them?'"
4. Can you think of any other possible meaning for wisely/shrewdly?
5. Who profits from this kind of wisdom? Who gains power? Who loses power?
6. What power did Joseph enjoy in Egypt in his time? Why?
7. Compare the "wisdom" of the two pharaohs. Look at the profit motive for each. Which Pharaoh, Joseph's or Moses' ultimately gained more for the land of Egypt?

[11](#) *So the Egyptians appointed taskmasters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor. As a result, they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. [12](#) But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and flourished; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. [13](#) They worked the Israelites ruthlessly [14](#) and made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar, and with all kinds of work in the fields. Every service they imposed was harsh. [15](#) Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names*

were Shiphrah and Puah, [16](#)“When you help the Hebrew women give birth, observe them on the birthstools. If the child is a son, kill him; but if it is a daughter, let her live.” [17](#)The midwives, however, feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt had instructed; they let the boys live. [18](#)So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?”

[19](#)The midwives answered Pharaoh, “The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before a midwife arrives.”

[20](#)So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied and became even more numerous. [21](#)And because the midwives feared God, He gave them families of their own.

[22](#)Then Pharaoh commanded all his people: “Every son born to the Hebrews you must throw into the Nile, but every daughter you may allow to live.”

1. What is the result of oppressing God’s people? What does that reveal and confirm?
2. Think back to Joseph’s story. What was the result of increased pressure on him?
3. What has happened to the esteem and honor in which the Hebrews were held? Why?
4. Look at verse 19, as the midwives answer Pharaoh. Are they telling the truth? Or are they exaggerating to save lives? How do you know? Which verse backs your view?
5. See the [footnote below on the midwives Shiphrah and Puah](#). Summarize what you read. What surprises you in the claims?
6. What are your thoughts?

Pastor says, “Today we have to begin to understand that we have bondage. We are marked people. We have an enemy that wants to put bondage in our life, and we have to realize what that bondage is. We have to submit our lives to the Holy Spirit so He can reveal that bondage to us, because this bondage is meant to diminish our life, to kill, steal and destroy.” He continues, “A couple of weeks ago we said we do not really know what we’re missing in freedom because we have never experienced that level of freedom. Many times we are unaware of what God wants to do.”

1. Are you in bondage?
2. How does one know that one is in bondage? Did the Hebrews think they were in bondage? How did they know?
3. Are Americans in bondage? How would one know? (See Romans 7: [19](#)For I do not do the good I want to do. Instead, I keep on doing the evil I do not want to do.)
4. How can the Holy Spirit help us in our plight? Do you have a testimony?
5. Is there a freedom beyond what you’ve known? What will that look like?

Pastor moves on to the “big idea.” He says, “Freedom lies where the balance of power lives.” Explain.

He continues, “And if we realize that power and freedom go hand in hand, we have to discern at what point in time we’ve given others power by our own confession, or at what point power has been taken away from us. In this case, the Egyptians were fearful, and they said, ‘How do we scheme to remove power from the Hebrew as a people. How do we enslave them and ultimately control them?’”

1. How do power and freedom go hand in hand? How are decisions made?
2. How is power relinquished in a confession? Is it always relinquished in confession? Is it possible sometimes to regain power by confession? Explain?
3. How did the Egyptians become slaves to their own fear, and ultimately lose everything? Did the Egyptians know they had become slaves? Why not?

4. Who knew anything at this point of the story?

Pastor recounts how the new President of Argentina, Javier Milei, spoke in Davos, Switzerland, at the World Economic Forum, a gathering of the global elite who are seeking to create a global strategy to control humanity as benevolent dictators. He said, "They feel very good about what they do, because they are creating solutions for this complicated and difficult world. But, I do not think they were prepared to hear what President Milei had to say. He says this, 'Watch out western world. You are losing your principles that are going to rob you of your freedom.' He talks about a socialist society, where freedom gets taken away from you systematically without you even knowing it. It's the frog in the pot of boiling water scenario."

1. What is the frog in the pot scenario? Why does a cold-blooded animal not feel the water getting warmer?
2. Have we become cold-blooded?
3. What do you know of Argentina's recent past? How bad did it get there?
4. What key principles are being sacrificed that are ultimately leading to the loss of freedom?
5. Why are pastors being arrested in Canada?
6. Where does power lie in an elective democracy where elections are not tampered with?
7. How is that power of the people in their vote lost?
8. How important is the demonstrable integrity of the vote?
9. For whom is demonstrable integrity most important? The politician who wins? Or the people who voted? Why?

Pastor says, "Much of this freedom gets played out in the way we live our lives." He goes on to highlight principles gleaned from themes that arise in the Israelites story. Themes that might point to where we have given up power. He says "Freedom can either be handed away, or freedom can be taken away. In either case power is being transferred from you. Remember freedom lies where the balance of power lives. You have to say who has the power because that will determine who has the freedom as well. This is not always a bad thing." He says by way of illustration, "If you decide to not go to work, your supervisor has the power to fire you. He has the power to take away your substance. He also had the power to hire you in the first place, to prosper your family and offer the substance you need to survive."

1. Now look back on Pastor's first statement: How much of this freedom comes from the way we live our life? What do we lose by choosing not to meet an obligation?
2. What do we gain by meeting obligations?
3. Talk of the "balance of power" Pastor speaks of. What is on each side of the balance?
4. He says, "When we choose to live our life in such a way that we give Jesus the power over our lives, we realize that that's true freedom for us." Explain.

He lists where you might have given away your power, thus impacting your freedom:

- **Complacency and contentment.** The children of Israel had fled from Egypt and bondage, but on their journey they became complacent. When complacency crept in, they received a false sense of security. Pastor points out that in our own nation right now, we may have shifted a little bit. We grew up in a great country with safety and security given to us. As such we have disengaged from our political

environment, disengaged from moral and social arguments. We have allowed “Egypt” to inform our morality rather than allowing the Word of God to inform our moral minds. We have given parts of our power away and with it we have lost freedom.

1. Explain. What does complacency do to our own will?
 2. What does contentment have to do with our own will?
 3. In 1755, Benjamin Franklin is known to have said, “Those who would give up essential Liberty to purchase a little temporary Safety deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.” Apply this to Mark’s message here.
 4. How well does Franklin’s thought apply to today’s events?
 5. Read carefully Proverbs 1: [28](#) Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will earnestly seek me, but will not find me. [29](#) For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the LORD. [30](#) They accepted none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. [31](#) So they will eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. [32](#) *For the waywardness of the simple will slay them, and **the complacency of fools will destroy them.*** [33](#) But whoever listens to me will dwell in safety, secure from the fear of evil.” What do you see? What is the first step to a loss of our freedom? (Review Romans 1: [28](#) *Furthermore, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, He gave them up to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.* How does this fit the principle we learn from Proverbs?) According to this, what is our first step to regain freedom lost?
 6. “Church, this is not a time to be complacent. This is a time to be highly aware and alert to what God is doing, what the enemy is doing and what is happening in the world around us.” What are the best means available for us to this end? How much time should we spend in the world’s resources?
- **Forsaking principles for comfort.** Look up Galatians 5: [1](#) [It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not be encumbered once more by a yoke of slavery.](#) Mark points out, “The children of Israel traveled back and forth throughout the wilderness. They did not have to spend forty years there, but what happened is they kept looking back and saying, “Maybe we were actually better off as slaves. The wilderness is hard. The wilderness is unsure. I want to go back to the days where I was comfortable.” They were willing to forsake what God promised in His Word, because they just wanted to be comfortable.
 1. What comfort did they have in Egypt? What comfort did they find in the desert?
 2. What freedom did they have in Egypt? What freedom did they have in the desert?
 3. What hope could they have, looking ahead to life in Egypt? What hope did they have, looking ahead in the desert?
 4. How has our own quest for comfort given power to something that is actually and deliberately designed to rob us of our freedom?
 - **Idolatry and distorted principles.** “As the folks waited for Moses’ return from the top of Mt. Sinai, they became a little disgruntled. They said, ‘Where’s Moses. Where’s God. They’ve left us. Let’s get all our gold together and build a golden calf.’” Mark says, “They needed something give their attention to that had no power to give them life, but in many ways they diverted their own power to worship an idol that had zero interest in them or in their lives. It was an inanimate object. In many

ways, when you shift your attention from a God who loves you to things or to activities, that is idolatry. Idolatry happens anytime you put anything above your relationship with God. Anything.”

1. Comment. Do you have questions?
 2. Do you have a confession?
 3. Is this harsh? Or just good information?
 4. What has more power in your life? Is it giving you more freedom? Or is it taking freedom away from you?
 5. Pastor’s bunny trail: We are supposed to be bondservants to Christ. How can that be talking about freedom? (Remember above, “It was for freedom that Christ has set us free.” Review from John 8, “The one the Son sets free is truly free.”) “Scripture says ‘He breaks every chain. He removes all bondage.’ So, what is it? He wants us free? Or he wants a bunch of slaves? Answer him. (See [footnote 5](#))
 6. Pastor says, “Here’s the key: If we can learn to be a slave to Christ and to His ways, the power diverts to blessing us and to prosper us. In contrast, with the enemy, when we’ve given our power to the enemy and the world’s ways, that power diminishes us and steals and robs from us. When Jesus breaks those chains of darkness, we become a bondservant to light and to Christ. We need to learn how to say, ‘God’s ways are higher. I want to give myself to learn His ways.’” Rephrase the key.
 7. What is the difference between an obedient son being apprenticed by a wise and loving father to take over his estate, and a slave to a master who seeks nothing but his own profit at the expense of all else.
- **Ignoring the consequences of choices.** Pastor Mark: “When we go through the story of the children of Israel, it is cause and effect...cause and effect. And we begin to see, as we learn from their errors that our choices have consequences.” Look at Galatians 6: [7](#)*Do not be deceived: God is not to be mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap in return. [8](#)The one who sows to please his flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; but the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.* Mark says, “We’re either putting the power of our works into God’s hands, or we’re putting our power in other places.”
 1. Explain. Who is in control when you obey an outside directive?
 2. Look at the examples Paul gives of this principle in the following verses: [9](#)*Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. [10](#)Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to the family of faith.* What sowing is Paul suggesting?
 3. What will be the harvest?

Pastor lists what gets stolen most often: Your joy. Your peace. “Freedom means you are able to be the person you were equipped to be from birth. God has designed you, purposed you and He has a plan for you, and freedom is established on your behalf so that you have the ability to live fully according to God’s design in you. What happens over time through your decisions and influences around you, systematically those capabilities are being taken away. The power is being shifted, we become enslaved, and we don’t even know what has happened.

1. Do you have a testimony? If you ever smoked, what first led you to begin, despite your knowledge of the danger?
2. How can one break away?
3. Pastor asks, "Do you have the ability to say no to the alcohol?"
4. "Do you have the ability to say no to the temptation of porn that's on your phones?"
5. "Do you have the ability to say no to the sweets that are on the counter?"
6. "Do you have the ability to say no to bingeing the series in midstream because the content has gone decisively sideways to areas you must not explore?"

Pastor says if you say, "No," to any of these questions, that activity has too much power in your life.

1. Review again [Romans 7 above](#). Define slavery on these terms.
2. Describe freedom on these terms. What can you say no to when you are truly free?
3. What can you not say no to?
4. When you are truly free, what is it you can't do? What is it you WILL NOT do? What is the difference?
5. When love is your guide, what is the motive behind your choice?
6. Pastor asks, "What do you own? What owns you." Answer him.
7. He says, "The reason we have Financial Peace University is because 'The borrower is the slave to the lender.'" Explain. What would financial freedom mean to you?
8. Does living paycheck to paycheck give you freedom? If the entire system shut down but for the debt collection system, where would you be?

Pastor says, there is one solution to the dilemma, and that's Jesus. "You have to choose to give Him the power, to become a bond servant to Jesus, and allow Him the ability to break every chain in your life. We made decisions in our life whereby we abdicated our own right to decide. We've given society too much place in our life, with Hollywood and social media. Then we wonder why we are overwhelmed with anxiety and depression, with substances to help us cope. As we go through this series, I want you to look at your own life. Maybe you didn't realize that you've been giving power to things. Power that has sapped your own freedom."

1. What do you see?
2. What are your thoughts?
3. Do you see steps that you can take?

Look up 1 Corinthians 7: [21](#) *Were you a bond servant when you were called? Do not let it concern you—but if you can gain your freedom, take the opportunity.* [22](#) *For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman. Conversely, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave.* [23](#) *You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.* [24](#) *Brothers, each one should remain in the situation he was in when God called him.*

1. What do you see? (Who is greatest in the kingdom of God?)
2. See again [footnote 5 below](#) on bond slaves. What choices can a bond slave make?
3. How can Christ's bond slave have more freedom than any other?
4. With what price were we bought? What does that say of our value to our master?

5. If you were going to be a slave anyway, whom do you prefer to be your master? Look at Galatians 4: [3](#)So also, when we were children, we were enslaved under the basic principles of the world. [4](#)But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, [5](#)to redeem those under the law, that we might receive our adoption as sons. [6](#)And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" [7](#)So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, you are also an heir through God. How shall we then live?
6. What does the freedom of a son entail?
7. How much power does a slave have to say no to the master?
8. Mark says, "You do not have the power in yourself. You have to call on the Holy Spirit. We need to give Him the power to make decisions for us." Respond. Does this help at all? What practical step does this suggest?
9. Review again John 8:[31](#)So He said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide (dwell, remain, stay) in My word, you are truly My disciples. [32](#)Then you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free (free you, set you free, liberate you, make you exempt from bondage)." ... [34](#)Jesus replied, "Truly, truly, I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. [35](#)A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son belongs to it forever. [36](#)So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." How is a member of the family treated differently from a non-member?
10. In God's household which are you? If dwelling on the Word makes you a member of the family, what steps can you take? Are you automatically and instantly free? Or do you dwell for a time in the Word before you know your freedom?
11. Why? What does time yield?
12. Are there any possible alternative choices you could take that bear this promise?
13. Pastor says, "These are times that require vigilance. We must be a free people. Spiritually free." Are you ready?

Take the time to pray.

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Pray for every aspect of this Tuesday's election, that it be free and fair, and that any criminal attempts to thwart a free and fair election be discovered, arrested, uncovered and all perpetrators revealed. Pray that there be no possible doubt as to the results.
3. Look at where your freedom is being challenged. Where is that challenge coming from. Think of a strategy that will protect your freedom and that of your family.
4. Your prayer all week: "Holy Spirit allow your light into my life to show me where the enemy has been taking from me to diminish your life in me. Show me where I am still in bondage, restore the freedom and make clear the steps I need to take to access that true freedom you promised." Make a list as He speaks to you. Write it down.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On life “...more abundantly...”**—Where Jesus says, “I came that they might have life and life more abundantly, the Greek is even more encouraging. The word “life” in Greek is ζωή (zoe), which is not merely physical existence. It is defined as *the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God, and through him both to the hypostatic λόγος (logos) and to Christ* in whom the λόγος put on human nature. In other words, that life as expressed in God. The word translated “more abundantly” makes adequate translation difficult. It means “*properly all-around, ‘more than’ (‘abundantly’); beyond what is anticipated, exceeding expectation; ‘more abundant,’ going past the expected limit.*” The point is this and it’s important: The good that God seems intent on providing us is far greater than the greatest good of our own imagination.
2. **A brief review of the history of the offspring of Israel**—The offspring of Israel came to Egypt due to the conniving of ten of his sons toward Joseph. They were jealous of the surpassing favor of their father toward him and were bent on destroying him. They first sold him to Ishmaelite slave traders who then sold him to Potiphar. Favor on Joseph sent him from most favored slave to most favored inmate in Pharaoh’s dungeon to most favored minister in all the land of Egypt. This was God’s plan to allow Egypt to provide for the needs of all the surrounding nations as famine wasted the lands. When our reflection picks up in the first chapter of Exodus, the offspring of Israel were out of favor for the reasons pastor describes, and though numbering in the millions, they were now a race enslaved.
3. **On dealing shrewdly with the children of Israel**—Pharaoh uses the term “shrewdly” in his dealings with Israel, but the Hebrew word could also be translated as “wisely.” This highlights the important fact that the world has a kind of wisdom that is anathema to the wisdom of God.
4. **On the Hebrew midwives**—The “Hebrew midwives,” who refused to bend to Pharaoh’s command to destroy all the Hebrew male children are legends in the annals of courageous women of history. Who Shiphrah and Puah were is a matter of study. What does it mean that “...he gave them families of their own?” Here is an interesting article, a Jewish source, that suggests that it’s absurd to even think that there were only two midwives for the children of Israel, who numbered in the millions. When Pharaoh called for the “Hebrew midwives,” the translation could correctly suggest that he called for those Egyptian midwives who headed the work among the Hebrews, the “midwives to the Hebrews.” He, then, gave them the command for them to convey to their co-laborers (absolutely no pun intended), but these Egyptian women feared God, and refused. According to the article, this opens up the possibility that the women were not lying to Pharaoh about the surprisingly short labor of Hebrew women, but surprised

at the contrast between their labor and the labor of Egyptian women. Their names do not indicate their nationality.

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3555182/jewish/Who-Were-Shifra-and-Puah-the-Hebrew-Midwives.htm

5. **On bond slaves in the New Testament**—The Greek word for “bond slave” in Greek is δοῦλος, (*doulos*). It is pregnant in meaning and implication in the Greek New Testament. It comes from the Greek verb that means to tie, bind; by some from ΔΑΛΩ, (*DALO*), which means to ensnare or to capture. It is often translated “bond slave,” because it begins and ends with chains and bondage. The word *doulos* is defined as *one who gives himself up wholly to another's will*. The key here is “wholly,” as if there were no other choice. Pat Robertson once taught, “If you want to know the will of God, to obey it, then have no will of your own in the matter.” Think of the life of Paul, and you see what Paul meant by being a bond servant to Christ. Where we resist is where we are yet lacking in the freedom Pastor Mark speaks of. Where God’s will is the fullness of joy, being free to do God’s will wholly is the quintessential nature of freedom.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Romans 7:14-17
Tuesday: Romans 7:18-23
Wednesday: Romans 8:1-4
Thursday: Romans 8:5-8
Friday: Romans 8:9-11
Saturday: John 8:34-36
Sunday: John 10:10

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.