



Voices Week 1

Opening Prayer

God, help us to know you are present here with us. Help us to receive what you are inviting each of us into.

Talk It Over

This week's talk was all about us saying 'yes' to the freedom God invites each of us into.

- What does this topic of freedom stir up in you?
- Do you know someone who walks in freedom well? Describe how they reflect freedom to you.

Read Luke 4:18-19 (NIV)

Early on in his public ministry Jesus clearly tells the people in the temple his intention: He was on a freedom mission. In a world with so much oppression, both externally and internally, Jesus was clear that he came to invite all people into freedom.

- In what ways, do you see slavery and oppression in our culture?
- What are some good things in our world that we can become enslaved to?
- Looking back at this year alone, share an area of life or a moment you've experienced God's freedom?
- Share about an area of life you'd like more freedom in. Where are you at currently in that situation, where have you been with that situation, and where would you like to be with that situation?

Read Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

Oppression always begins in our mind. Oppression wants us to think: There is no way out. I'm stuck. This is as good as it gets. When we stop thinking we can change or get out of a situation, it's likely the spirit of oppression. Along those same lines, we often forget to acknowledge just how tenacious oppression really is. Oppression doesn't give up easily, it doesn't back down quickly, and it can come in various flavors and colors. Overcoming oppression isn't a one time experience more often than not, but rather a regular rhythm of actively saying "yes" to freedom. In this sense, overcoming oppression requires us to stand firm in our belief that we can overcome and break free.

- In what ways have you ever experienced the tenacious stubborn hold of oppression?
- How would you best describe the feeling and experience of being enslaved or stuck?
- Is there an area in your life you need to start thinking change is in fact possible?

Read 1 John 4:18

Fear is not only the currency of oppression, God regularly invites us to not live fearful, fear driven, fear based lives. In fact, God regularly reminds us in the Bible that he is our refuge, our hiding place, our defender, our protector, and so on. All this to say, growing less fearful and growing in our faith isn't about denying fear or willing ourselves out of fear, but rather about connecting with God and confronting our fears with God. By

putting God in his rightful place and right sizing God, Jesus helps us to experience the power of his love and freedom from our fears.

- What are some fears you often find yourself believing or conforming to?
- Has God ever helped you confront a fear? Share about that experience.
- Have you ever experienced God's perfect love before? If so, how would you describe that encounter.
- Consider a specific fear or place of bondage in your life. What specific words or tools would God offer you as you confront the oppression?

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for your perfect love. Help us to believe in and to say 'yes' to your freedom.