

## Freedom

Lock-down has been challenging. We miss people. We miss places. We are ready to take a breath of air outside our “new normal” patterns of life. In some ways lock-down feels like we are locked away, our normal freedoms restricted dramatically. And the reality of the physical situation is that in many ways that is the case. Yet as Christians, we must remember that though we may be locked-down physically, we are free spiritually.

The words of the Benedictus that is said in the Church of England Morning Prayers are an adaptation of Zechariah’s song following the birth of John the Baptist in Luke 1. There is one verse that always makes me feel amazed as I read it. It says that we are... *‘Free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.’*

These words are true in all times, but in our current situations, remembering that we are free to worship him (to give God value and praise for who He is) is amazing. And this purpose of freedom is reflected in many places throughout the Bible: In Exodus, God sets the Israelites free from Egypt; Gal. 5.1 says, *‘It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.’*; In 2 Cor.3.17 Paul says, *‘Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.’* There are many more passages because freedom is a central theme in the Bible.

How do we use this spiritual freedom in these challenging time?

It comes back to our worship. I think we can worship God in two key ways:

1. **Through our words** - We can pray to God and sing to him for all the great things he has done for us, and all the great things he has done throughout history. Also we engage with people virtually, or from a 2-metre safe distance, we can speak of the hope, love, peace and joy of Christ into their lives. This is bringing honour to who God is - a form of worship!
2. **Through our deeds** - The way we act within our households and outside too, as we live our socially distanced lives, is really important. Loving our neighbours as ourselves is part of Jesus’ summary of the law and at times such as these, more than ever, I think learning to live our lives in this way is key. Perhaps it is helping someone who is struggling with their shopping; maybe giving someone a call; it could be safely taking a treat to someone who may be struggling with being alone. As we serve each other we are worshipping God as we are giving worth and value to what God is calling his children to do.

Of course our freedom is not for our own immediate gain, though as we worship God we do draw closer to Him. Our freedom is all so God can be glorified more in the world. As John the Baptist says of Jesus, *‘He must increase and I must decrease’* (John 3:30). In our freedom to worship we lift Jesus higher and in this world that is in fear and despair, as Jesus is raised higher, then they can start to recognise Him for the saving grace that he offers - that undeserved gift of life with Him now and for ever.

So, through this time make your worship louder and stronger so that the world can see the freedom that is offered through Jesus.

### **A Prayer**

Heavenly Father,  
Help us this week to understand  
the fullness of worshipping you without fear.  
And help our worship, in word and deed, lift your name higher,  
so that the world will discover the freedom we have in you.  
Amen.