

Live New Futures / Create New Futures

A message on the Exodus | Freedom Shabbat 2011

By Kevin Austin, Director of Not for Sale's Abolitionist Faith Community

Tonight we conclude our celebration of Passover. Once slaves in the land of Egypt, God set His people free. Your ancestors – your people – you. As a Christian, a follower of Jesus, I have also been grafted into the story. We were once slaves in the land of Egypt.

God rescued. God Redeemed. Breaking the chains of oppression; shattering the yoke of despair, God led the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, away from Pharaoh and his army, through the waters and into a land of milk and honey.

But you know the story well. Some people didn't want to leave Egypt. They grumbled and complained: "Moses, there isn't enough food. . . Moses, I'm thirsty . . . Moses, Miriam looked at me funny. . . Moses, it's hot! . . . and so forth." Some wanted to go back. It was hard being free.

God created new futures for His people. This meant change. It took effort. There was risk. There were also wide-open spaces, great opportunities, true freedom, true shalom.

Today, are we all that different? Many of us live in bondage and oppression to one thing or another. We serve Pharaoh without realizing it. It's sometimes easier to compromise, to live in Egypt. But God wants to set us free. When I look around this room tonight I see people with an incredible heritage. People

gifted and wealthy with education, money, dreams, and hopes. You are among the most powerful people in the world. Will you settle for the American dream, serving Pharaoh or some lesser oppressor? Or will you move into a life of freedom?

Live new futures. Let your heritage be a catalyst to move you into a life of opportunity and hope.

Part of the joy of living new futures is then creating new futures for others. Out of who we are we act. We “do” based on who we “are”. We are “free” so we in turn create “freedom for others”.

I invite all of us to not only live new futures but to create new futures. Specifically, I would call us all to lean into the story of Exodus and focus once again on the reality of slavery and the redeeming actions of God.

Today there are more slaves than at any other time in history. According to some experts there are more slaves in the United States today than there were at the time of the Civil War. Modern Slavery is an incredible money making activity. Perpetuated by violence and greed, modern day slavery violates the belief that all are created in the image of God. Human trafficking breaks several of the Ten Commandments: “Thou shall not steal . . . “Thou shall not kill . . . Thou shall not covet . . .”

Where is God’s redemption for these slaves?

Where is their exodus?

Who will God use to set these people free?

You and me.

God will use us.

Not for Sale wants to end modern day slavery. We want to create new futures for the vulnerable, the oppressed, and the slave. We invite you join with us.

To that end Not for Sale has created, and are continually creating, ways for you and I to enter into redemptive actions so others can be set free. Not for Sale believes everyone should have a way to use his or her gifts, skills, passions, and finances to make a difference. If you are a business person, an athlete, a student, a person of faith, a lover of chocolate, etc., there are ways you can create new futures with Not for Sale.

For example, Not for Sale created a way for all of us to use our money redemptively. The free2work App shows us which companies are working for Pharaoh and which ones believe in freedom. (Illustrate) Not only does this innovative solution help you and I to make better choices, but also it puts pressure on companies to clean up their supply chains.

We train people in our academy in how to investigate slavery in our backyards and then what to do about it when we find it. We have backyard academies in different cities as well as weeklong trainings in San Francisco.

We have a fellowship where young people like yourselves can devote 6 months to on-the-front-lines work with Not for Sale.

Not for Sale is modeling freedom in other countries as well: In Northern Thailand we have a village of kids rescued off the border between Burma and Thailand; in Peru we have innovative work among the street youth where we have helped create a surfing tribe and a landscaping company; we are developing ways to help via agricultural products; on and on. . .

All of these and more can be found on the Not for Sale website.

And, of course, we also welcome your financial support.

So in conclusion, I want to thank you for your hospitality. I also want to leave us with this invitation and challenge: we can live in freedom or we can settle for less. I firmly believe that we, in this room, can be a powerful force for positive, hope-infused change, which will help repair the world. We can live new futures and create new futures. I hope you will partner with me and Not for Sale specifically and strategically.