

Awaken

The Lord is doing a new thing

Anne Calver & John McGinley

Session 2: The Journey Out of Captivity)

Pre-reading: Chapter 2: The Journey out of Captivity

Look Back

What are you thankful for at the moment?

How did you get on living out the practice of 'putting something off / and/ or putting something on, that you identified in the last session?

Where have you seen God at work recently?

Look Up

Take some time to worship God together.

Here are some songs that would connect with the theme of Freedom.

Songs to use in worship

- I speak Jesus
- Reckless Love
- My Jesus My Saviour
- There is power in the name of Jesus to break every chain
- What can wash away my sin – nothing but the blood

Or use Psalm 139 in your worship

Have one or two people read verses 1-16

Then pause and invite people to pray prayers of praise inspired by the Psalm

Then read verses 17-24

Pray for the Spirit to come and bring revelation and help us to step into the freedom Jesus has won for us.

Encourage people to pray as Spirit leads and share any words of revelation he gives.

The Word

Theme Introduction

To introduce the discussion you could play the Big Church Read Session 2 video from John or Anne for this session or you could introduce it using the following summary:

Chapter 2 frames awakening as a journey out of captivity into intimacy with God. The Biblical story is God's relentless rescue-story—Eden's "Where are you?", Israel's deliverance, and Jesus "tabernacling" among us—showing that God initiates return, and repentance is woven into his heart from the beginning. The chapter re-centres the church on the cross and the blood of Christ: freedom, cleansing, humility, and renewed joy flow from daily returning to Jesus' sacrifice.

Our Egypt today is the spiritual strongholds that keep churches and believers captive (fear, pride, control, religion/works-based striving, and political spirits). The freedom Jesus brings is based on his victory on the cross, and is found through truth, repentance, and Spirit-led discernment.

The need for freedom is both corporate and personal: God exposes mould in “houses,” shakes compromised structures, and calls leaders with courage and humility.

Personally, our “spiritual slavery” comes from orphan-mindedness, performance identity, fear, independence, religious rule-keeping, etc. And it is in embracing our identity and our heavenly father’s sons and daughters, we discover freedom in his love.

The chapter ends by locating the call to freedom in the call back to Eden and intimacy with God and how in that freedom we can see the promised land of his kingdom come through our lives.

As you were reading this chapter of Awaken what really struck you?

Or: what sections of this chapter felt particularly relevant to your life or our situation in the church today?

Read Exodus 3:7–14 (God hears and rescues)

1. What does this passage reveal about God’s character toward suffering and bondage?

In what ways can a church be “freed from Egypt” through Christ’s victory and yet still carry slavery inside it? Which stronghold (fear, pride, control, religion, political spirit) do you think most commonly shows itself in your context of the church, and why?

2. God said to Moses “I have heard... so now, go”.

What might God be saying to the church at this time about leading us out of what is binding us. What might obedience require?

3. What does “a good and spacious land” suggest about God’s goal for his people (beyond mere escape)?

In this chapter the line from a song about God “chasing us down” is quoted to express his desire to restore intimacy in our relationship with him. How do you respond to that?

Thinking about personal slavery and freedom.

Which of the “slave vs son/daughter” contrasts felt uncomfortably accurate—and why? (please share at whatever level you feel able to).

4. What can we learn together about how to come back to the cross daily in practice? What does this look like for you?

Look Forward

What “cry” (personal or corporate) do you want to bring honestly to God this week?

What practical step would represent moving from captivity-thinking to freedom-thinking? What will you do to choose to believe the truth and reject the lie in this area?

Pray:

Ask each person to share the area they need freedom in

They could simply share this out loud .

Or you could set up a cross and invite people to write that area of their lives on a piece of paper and place it in a basket at the base of the cross.

Then pray for God to come and bring freedom:

Make a declaration that "In the name of Jesus we break agreement with any lies that have led us into captivity"

Invite people to ask God for forgiveness (quietly or out loud)

Then make the declaration: "Lord we thank you that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, and we receive that blood on our behalf and we declare that the power of the enemy to keep us enslaved in this area of our life is broken by the power of the blood of Christ"

Pray for the Holy Spirit to come and fill us with the love of God and to speak to our spirits that we are God's children.

Next Session:

Remind people to read Chapter 3 "Personal Revival" and Chapter 4 "Honouring the Holy Spirit". Encourage group members to read it prayerfully looking for what God is saying to them and to come ready to share at the next session.