

# LET'S TALK

## ABOUT MODERN SLAVERY

Join The Clewer Initiative and churches across the country in praying for an end to modern slavery, and protecting those most vulnerable to exploitation.



# ANTI-SLAVERY DAY RESOURCES

*Prayers, reflections, and songs prepared by The Clewer Initiative to use in Church services for Anti-Slavery Day around 18<sup>th</sup> October.*

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**Modern slavery is one of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's greatest injustices. According to the Global Slavery Index, over 40 million people – men, women, and children – are victims of modern slavery around the world.**

They may be enslaved for their labour, working in dangerous and demeaning conditions. They could be being exploited sexually. Others will be working in private homes, for families who live in luxury while they sleep on the floor.

A global issue, modern slavery also happens close to home, in the towns, cities and rural areas of the United Kingdom. Many people are surprised to hear that the goods and services we consume everyday could be reliant on slave labour.

We believe that the tools to end modern slavery already exist within the local community, and that the local church has a unique opportunity, and responsibility, to help end it. Working with law enforcement, statutory agencies, and charities, let's talk about how we can join together to make a difference to the suspected 136,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

The role the church plays in the local community is key to this challenge. Every day the church supports people through outreach projects like foodbanks, debt centres, homeless drop-ins, and, throughout the colder months, Winter Night Shelters. Each of those people we support is vulnerable to modern slavery in one of three ways:

1. In their latest annual report, the Modern Slavery Helpline described the **recruitment of victims from places of worship** as an emerging trend. Each church-based project supporting vulnerable people needs to be aware of the risk and safeguard against it.
2. There may also be people coming to your project **who have already been victims** of modern slavery, but don't know that **there is help and support available** if they tell someone their story. Could you say 'let's talk' to a potential victim and help them find help?
3. The support given to **'rescued' victims of modern slavery** has gaps and can lead to them leaving the government system without accommodation or stable employment. Due to subsequent homelessness or other vulnerabilities they may attend one of your church's projects. Could you recognise them and **prevent them from being re-trafficked**?

What follows is one response to modern slavery, lifting up the issue in prayer and petition. We urge you to not stop there, instead begin slavery-proofing your church and church projects today, and help us protect vulnerable people from modern slavery.

Go to [www.theclewerinitiative.org/letstalk](http://www.theclewerinitiative.org/letstalk) to find out how to access training materials to start slavery-proofing your church and church projects.

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# A REFLECTION FOR ANTI-SLAVERY DAY

*Written by the Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern, Chair of The Clewer Initiative.*

## THE PASSAGE: LUKE 18:1-8 (NIV)

### The Parable of the Persistent Widow

“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

“For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’”

And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

## A REFLECTION

There are five themes in this passage which can help us explore freedom, especially through the lens of Modern Slavery.

### The Widow... a character controlled and exploited

This story offers a relevant insight into one of the great challenges to freedom in our times - the continuing growth of modern slavery.

In a complex and highly organised society, the widow represents someone whose place is totally dependent, someone who is under the control of others. A place of great vulnerability, always open to opportunities for exploitation. A place of silent suffering and restriction, hardly recognised by others, because of an apparently respectable, religiously endorsed term: ‘widow’.

The same could be said for those designated as ‘slave’, in biblical times, but also in our own times. A term describing those largely hidden providers of the goods and services we are constantly encouraged to consume - the only issue being the price we are expected to pay. Like the widow in the story, so for us with those in forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced organ donation, organised begging, forced marriage, or those who have been groomed to carry drugs. The only concern for the rest of us is what price do I pay for services I want? How often do we ask, what price is paid by the providers of what I consume? The character who teaches from this parable is hidden, exploited, and controlled.

## The Social Context

The Judge is a good representative of lives lived for selfish ends. He is indifferent to the plight of others, indifferent to the big questions of God, our purpose in creation, and judgement for justice. He is determined to live in his own safe world. What echoes do we see in lives lived online, in falsely cheerful Facebook pages, curated Instagram accounts, and anonymous Twitter feeds?

## Connecting the Extremes

The Judge and the widow seem to be trapped in separate environments. One of 'the haves', the Judge is concerned just with his own wellbeing. The other, 'a have not', is trapped, invisible, frustrated, fearful.

These separate worlds prevent any proper understanding of justice, and can only be opened up to each other through prayer. The widow cries out continually: a prayer for justice. Her Hidden Voice eventually touches the Judge - he cannot be comfortable once the sound of such suffering begins to be heard. He listens. He is changed from selfish priorities to a concern to share freedom with this exploited and excluded pray-er.

## A Challenge for Us

God grants justice to those who call out - this is the message of this Gospel. He does this by empowering the oppressed to call out, and by touching the hearts of the powerful to hear and respond. In our world today we have a moment of opportunity to be priests and mediators of this desperate human praying. We can teach ourselves to hear the Hidden Voices of the exploited and excluded of our own times - those in Modern Slavery being the most abused and vulnerable - and say we see you to those society has turned away from.

We can try to practice justice in our own dealings as consumers of services and ask the questions we have been encouraged to silence. More, we can play a key role in amplifying these Hidden Voices so that their prayers are better heard by those in power - in government, business, law enforcement, church and voluntary organisations, the media, and our own workplaces and community groups.

## Do Something Now!

The Clewer Initiative has produced materials to enable all kinds of communities to learn about listening to and responding alongside Hidden Voices. Discerning the widows of our time and becoming agents of that 'praying always' that brings empowerment to the vulnerable, and a readjustment of perspective and practice to those in places of power. Visit the website, download the Safe Car Wash app, contact the team, and take the widow seriously! **When the Son of Man comes, will He find such faith on earth?**



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# STORIES OF MODERN SLAVERY

## CHARLIE'S STORY

Watch and download a video of Charlie's Story: [www.theclewerinitiative.org/homeless](http://www.theclewerinitiative.org/homeless)

## MARY'S STORY

It's Christmas Eve and Mary is rushing through the town centre with her kids to get those final last bits of shopping done. She notices a young woman begging outside the supermarket and hesitates, before resolving to keep going, they have a lot to do. Her youngest son, Freddie, stops her and says 'Mum, shouldn't we talk to her, can we help her?'

Sighing Mary says 'of course' and they walk over. The woman looks thin and tired. She has a half eaten sandwich next to her and a bottle of water. But, Mary notices, she doesn't have any bedding or bags, none of the usual bits of paraphernalia you would associate with someone who was homeless.

Mary starts talking to her, asking her name, where she's from, could they do anything to help? The woman starts to open up. Her name is Rosa. She lives in London, a good few hours away from where she is now, in a small flat with a lot of people in it. The man who runs her accommodation drove her and four others to this town to beg today. She came to the UK to work but she has only been begging so far. She has to give all the money she makes to the man, and he checks on her periodically throughout the day.

Mary has a dawning realisation that this woman, and the others who have been bussed here today, are being exploited. She explains to Rosa that she can find her help if she wants it. She doesn't have to sit here, alone and cold on Christmas Eve.

## MIRIAM'S STORY

You can also watch Miriam's Story in our 'We See You' video: <https://youtu.be/l6OddIYjQ-E>

I got married quite early at the age of 19. I was married to an alcoholic. I had kids quite early and the abuse started probably within the first two years of the marriage. On regular occasions he would beat me, rape me. On many occasions he would do it in front of the kids. I was told that he owned me. The opportunity arose to come abroad when I was befriended by someone who, unbeknownst to me, was actually affiliated with a human trafficking ring in the UK. I thought long and hard about it because I had never been abroad, I had never left my children, so it was a massive decision.

Eventually I came to the UK, to a Christian family. And within the first week or so I realised I had made a terrible mistake. The madame of the house informed me that she owned me, and the only time I am allowed to leave is when she was ready to let me leave.

I was meant to work seven days a week, 16 hours a day, no pay. I slept on the floor. I took care of three kids, in a five bedroom house, cooked, washed, cleaned, ironed, laundry... you name it, I had to do it.

I would go to church with them, and it was weird. That no one ever came to ask me anything, or look for any signs that showed that something wasn't right with this family.

## CARLA'S STORY

Story via The Guardian: <https://bit.ly/2vWGVnz>

My mum used to have a tortilla shop, but when she got ill I quit school and became a cook at a small restaurant in San Pedro Sula to support my family. I was 15. I worked 12-hour shifts and finished every day at 6pm, the same time that the gang curfew in our city came into effect. Anyone on the streets after the curfew becomes a target. Every day I thought might be my last. One evening, my co-worker and I were walking to the bus stop when three gang members said we'd have to sell sex and drugs for them. "We're not asking you," they said. "We're giving you an order." They let us go, but I was terrified. The next night after work, they were there, waiting for us. They forced us into a car at gunpoint.

We drove to a poor neighbourhood and stopped at a wooden house with a tin roof. They pushed us into it and locked us in. When they finally opened the door again, a policeman was standing over us. We thought we were saved. Then he turned to the gang members and said: "It's good you finally got some new girls. Let me try them first." He was the first person to rape us. Then the gang members raped us.

In the morning, men paid to have sex with us; and every night the gang would tie us up, cover our eyes and separate us. Then we'd be driven to different street corners to sell cocaine, and one of the guys would stand behind us with a gun, collecting the cash. They gave us no food, no water. They said we didn't deserve it, that we had no rights.

Eventually, a client helped me escape. I told him I was being held there against my will. He came back the following evening, put me in a taxi to the bus station, and paid for my ticket to the Mexican border. Now I'm applying for refugee status to stay here in Mexico.

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# PRAYERS FOR ENDING MODERN SLAVERY

## A PRAYER FOR RELEASING HIDDEN VOICES

*Written by The Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern, Chair of The Clewer Initiative.*

**Heavenly Father,**

who sees the unseen and notices the unnoticed,  
help each of us to hear the Hidden Voices of those  
who pray for release from slavery and exploitation,  
so that we may give ourselves more fully to the service of your saving love,  
and be strengthened together as agents of your healing and hope,  
through Jesus Christ,  
who himself came to serve as a slave,  
so as to bring freedom and grace to all.

Amen

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## A COLLECT FOR MODERN SLAVERY

*Taken from 'From Shore To Shore: Liturgies, Litanies and Prayers from around the World by Kate Wyles, published by SPCK, London 2003'. Thanks to the Revd Dr Michael Clarke for his permission to use this collect.*

**Almighty and most loving God,**

through your Son Jesus, who came among us as a slave,  
choosing rather to serve his disciples than to be served by them;  
help us in our weakness not to seek to oppress others,  
nor to make peace with any form of exploitation,  
but in all things earnestly and of our own free will,  
to seek to serve each other following Christ's good example;  
this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

## A POST COMMUNION PRAYER

*Written by Revd Gemma Sampson, Diocese of Durham.*

### **Father God**

May we who have been strengthened by this sacrament, strengthen those in weakness

We who have been fed, feed those in hunger

We who have been welcomed, welcome others

We who have been seen and known, see and know the needs of others

Give us your grace to respond always in loving service

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen.

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## A PRAYER TO END MODERN SLAVERY

*Written by the Rt Revd Simon Burton-Jones, the Bishop of Tonbridge.*

### **Lord, you are a God who sets the captives free.**

Your Spirit searches restlessly for those in despair, that they may find the life you are calling them to.

We pray for those who are being trafficked and callously put to work in our region.

On the cross, you were powerless and subject to the cruelty of others. Look with mercy on those who suffer this way.

May we, who are blinded by the shallow distractions of daily life, feel the fear of the cornered and be roused to action.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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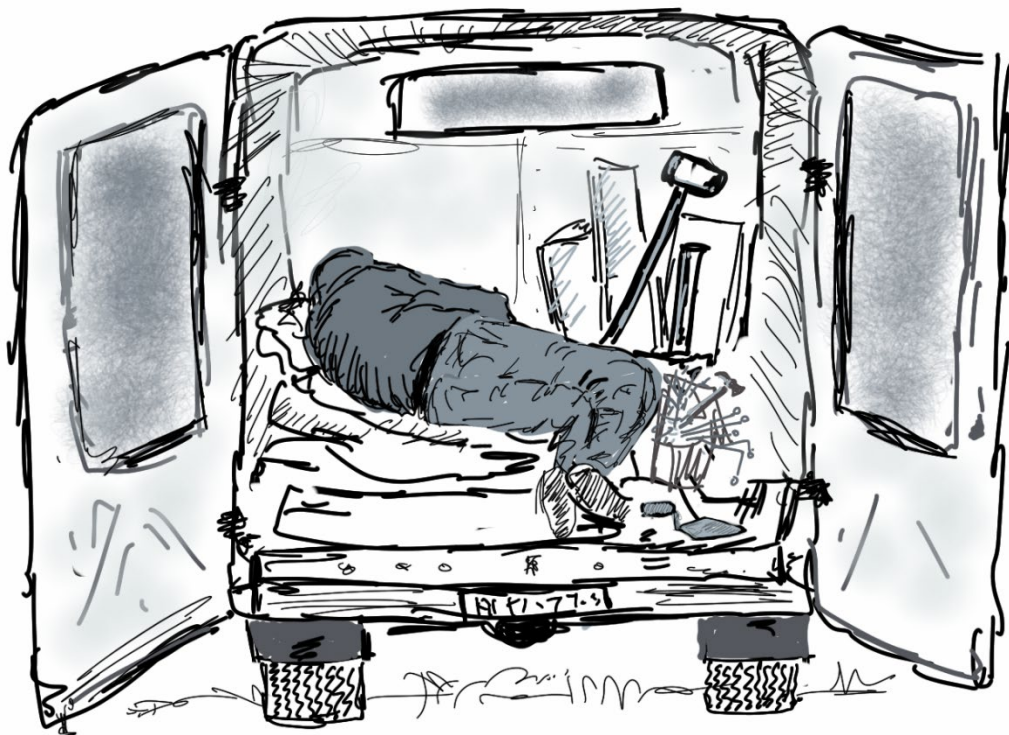
# A PRAYER FOR INTERNATIONAL VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY

*Written by the Revd Rachel Carnegie, Executive Director of the Anglican Alliance*

## Loving God

We call to you with hearts in pain for all in our world  
who suffer the horrors of modern slavery;  
for all who dream of a better life in another place  
only to be trapped, tricked and traded;  
for all those who labour, forced and unseen, to make our everyday possessions;  
for all who agonise for loved ones lost into this trade in humans.  
Your Son came to bring good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed –  
May we too be voices against oppression, channels of good news;  
May our eyes be opened wide to all who suffer in our midst but out of sight.  
All this we pray to you, loving God, for whom no one is invisible.  
Amen.

*You can download graphics to use on social media and share the campaign and the prayers with friends and family from [www.theclewerinitiative.org/letstalk](http://www.theclewerinitiative.org/letstalk)*



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# SONGS OR HYMNS TO USE IN YOUR SERVICE

## HYMNS

And Can It Be That I Should Gain - Charles Wesley

God of Freedom, God of Justice - Shirley Murray tune Picardi

## SONGS

Comfort, Comfort - Robin Mann tune Dorothea

Brother Sister Let Me Serve You - Richard Gillard

Jesus Christ is Waiting - John Bell

Freedom is Coming - South African Protest Hymn

## CONTEMPORARY

Let My People Go - Matt Redman

God of Justice (We Must Go) - Tim Hughes

Who You Say I Am - Hillsong Worship

No Longer Slaves - Bethel Music

Rescuer - Rend Collective

Weep With Me - Rend Collective

We Are One - Bishop Paul S. Morton Jr

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## NEXT STEPS

Find out more information about modern slavery and how to access training materials to start slavery-proofing your church and church projects by going to:

[www.theclewerinitiative.org/letstalk](http://www.theclewerinitiative.org/letstalk)

Download the [Safe Car Wash app](#), an easy way to help raise awareness of modern slavery and help to gather information for law enforcement. Search your phone's app store to download it today.



[www.theclewerinitiative.org/letstalk](http://www.theclewerinitiative.org/letstalk)