

SET THE CAPTIVES FREE!

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Isaiah 61:1 NKJV

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound.

I would like to focus on the last part of this Scripture which speaks about proclaiming liberty to the captives and opening the prison to those who are bound. We sometimes experience being captive or bound emotionally or spiritually in our lives, sometimes for many, many years, even decades. We'll look at how this happens and what we might experience when this takes place in our lives. Then we'll take a look at what the Lord wants to do in our lives and how He can set us free from our emotional or spiritual hurts and pains to live the abundant life with Him.

What is a captive? The dictionary says that a captive is "a prisoner, a person who is enslaved or dominated." He may be the captive of his own fears. He is kept in confinement or restraint.

Let's look at how much the Lord endured to give us healing in all areas of our life so we can be set free.

Isaiah 53:3-5 NLT

³ He was despised and rejected--a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we did not care. ⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God for his own sins! ⁵ But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed!

There are a lot of pain-related words in this passage (despised, rejected, sorrows, grief, weaknesses, wounded, crushed, beaten, whipped) that mostly refer to inner pain. He endured a lot for each one of us. Jesus paid a great price so that we could be healed and set free from emotional and spiritual pain as well as physical pain.

No one else would have endured all the pain Jesus did for you and me and the hurting generations that have followed His death and resurrection. Try to imagine being beaten, whipped, mocked and crucified by sinful wicked people who were yelling, "Crucify Him!" He had no sin; He was perfect. Yet, through all of this He said, "*Father forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.*"

He willingly came down from Heaven, a beautiful and perfect place, full of love and peace and light. Absolutely no pain there.

So who are we to hang on to any kind of bondages that He paid so much for, just to set us free? We have no right to keep them. In order to help others to be set free, we need to be willing to let go of our own pains, frustrations, and bondages. We need to live the life Jesus died to give us. We need to be a reflection of Jesus Christ to others that are struggling.

Jesus met people at their point of pain.

He touched lepers that no else would get near. They were rejected and shunned. They were unclean and had to yell out that they were unclean whenever they were close to other people. How devastating

and humiliating this must have been. They must have endured shame, rejection, abandonment, depression, and probably other emotional pain, as well as the physical pain of their disease.

What about the woman caught in adultery? People wanted to stone her to death. But, Jesus had compassion on her and told her to “go and sin no more”. He spoke to her spiritual and emotional condition and set her free. He healed her of her shame. No one else could heal her spiritual and emotional condition.

What about parents in the Bible who had demonized children? They came and begged Jesus to heal them. He healed and set free these children and mended the hearts of the children and the parents. Just think about it. They started a whole new life. They were set free to live in peace and joy instead of bondage, shame, and fear.

The purpose of these stories is not to tell us what Jesus did, but what Jesus *does*. He still heals and sets people free today.

Let’s take a look at some situations that cause hurt:

Situations	Typical Hurt Feelings
Death of a loved one	Loss
Divorce	Hate
Abuse	Fear
Physical	Guilt
Emotional	Self-Hate
Verbal	Revenge
Sexual	Abandonment
Abortion	Rejection
War Memories	Depression
Disability	Frustration
Job Loss, Accidents, Failures, Unforgiveness	

Hurts can’t be measured from the outside, but we can look at some of the consequences of hurt.

Hurts can begin in the family and affect the entire family. How many families have you known or heard about that have loved ones who are suffering with alcoholism or drugs, and the whole family suffers? Or a death in the family that changes the way a family relates to one another?

Hurts affect the entire person. The person suffering from drugs, alcohol, abuse, low self-esteem is affected in their body, mental state, and self-image.

Hurting people hurt others. They tend to lash out because of their own pain and inflict it on others, a lot of times directed toward those they are supposed to love.

Hurts cause lies to be established. These could be words said over and over, such as “You will never amount to anything,” “You are stupid,” “You are fat,” “You are ugly,” “No one wants to be around you,” “You’re not good enough,” and so on. I was listening to a video about a young man who was in the Angola Prison. He said that his mother had told him, “You’ll never amount to anything.” He said, “I believed her,” and he is in prison today.

Hurts cause vulnerability and hopelessness. (Beaten down from circumstances of life, words spoken over them, feeling helpless to do anything and without hope — “This is just the way it is and no one can or will help me.”) In our world today there are many, many people that have lost homes, jobs, or their health and have lost hope and as a result become very vulnerable. Some may have lost the will to try again.

Hurts cause shame. They may start to believe that they are not valuable persons. If abused in some way they feel ashamed even though it was someone else’s fault. We hear this a lot from people who were abused in some way as they were growing up.

Hurts cause defense mechanisms. If something was not done correctly, even unintentionally, they will try to defend themselves. They may feel very insecure.

Hurts cause us to wear “masks”. We may pretend that everything is great and put a smile on our face, while deep down inside there is great pain. (We may not want to show it because we might be embarrassed, afraid, or just not want to deal with it.)

Hurts cause anger or disappointment toward God. We might blame God for circumstances in life, such as the death of a loved one, natural disasters, or job loss. I have known of people who have become angry with God for taking their loved one. They feel He should have done something to prevent it and He didn’t.

Hurts cause restricted growth. Hurts can incapacitate people. If a person feels beaten down by the circumstances of life or other people he may feel he can’t do certain things, so he won’t even try. “Why bother. I’m not good enough. It’s too hard and I’ll fail anyway.”

Hurts cause blocked emotions. In extreme cases, people with Dissociative Disorder, what used to be called Multiple Personality Disorder, will split off into different personalities as a way of protecting themselves and shielding themselves from excruciating pain.

When we keep such hurts in our lives we are looking through tinted glasses; we are not seeing things clearly. Only when we can bring all of our pains and hurts to Jesus can He reveal to us what His thoughts and perspective are in those areas of our lives. He will wait for us to be willing to come to Him and let go of them. Then He can set us free to live the life He wants us to live and enable each son or daughter to do the things He has planned for them from the beginning.

Jeremiah 29:11 says, *“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”*

There is a freedom that He gives that no one else can give you. Your burden can be lifted off of you. You don’t have to continue to carry the pain, day after day or year after year. He waits for you to surrender and let Him heal your heart.

I can remember carrying around an emotional pain for years, at least 10 years I think, until I came to a place where I told the Lord, “I can’t handle this. I don’t know what to do about this situation and I am worn out from trying to figure it out.” I was crying out to the Lord, “Help!” I was desperate!

As I was sitting before Him silently listening for Him, He revealed to me what I needed to see and then gave me His perspective. That pain lost all of its strength in my life. It almost melted away. It has never been a problem again. The release, the peace, and the freedom could only come from God. No one else could take this away and bring healing.

When you receive your healing He can take you into new things in your life. He can use you in new areas that He has ready for you, right now.

As I waited before the Lord and listened for Him, He showed me where it started. And He showed me other places that I didn't even realize were problems. When you can see and hear from God what He wants you to see, and you are willing to release those areas to Him and trust that He will heal you, you can be set free, not partially, but totally. He really did come to set the captives free.

He also said He will never abandon you or desert you. You can count on the Lord when everything else seems to be like quicksand. He is the solid rock that never changes. This doesn't mean you will never have a problem in that area, but it will not have the same grip or power that it once did. It can't stick to you anymore unless you allow it to creep back into your life.

Have any of you ever felt like an emotional or spiritual captive in some area of your life? Maybe you have felt like you were stuck and you couldn't get out or you didn't know how to get out. You may be struggling like this today or know of someone that is experiencing such a struggle and cannot seem to find the way out.

Sometimes we don't even realize all the emotional baggage we carry because it has become our "normal" or we think we are stuck with it and no one can help us. It's been a part of our lives for so long, we may no longer think about it until someone says something to us or the Lord reveals to us things we have not been able to see. The pain can run very deep.

The Lord is the best! He knows exactly where you are and what you need today! All you have to do is be willing to let Him into those dark, painful, areas that you have kept hidden away. We are good at wearing masks, but the Lord knows all the areas that we try to keep hidden anyway. So, why not be open and honest with Him and just tell it like it is. He really can handle it better than you. We can hide from each other, but we can't hide from God. He is the One who brings everything to the light so it can be dealt with and defeated.

So, here are some ways you can be set free — no longer a captive, but free to soar with the Lord:

1. Ask the Lord to reveal anything that may be hidden in your life. Don't be so proud that you can't let Jesus in. He has your answer and the key to your freedom. The Son of Man has authority over whatever is paralyzing you.
2. Be real with Him. Look at it and ask God to give you His perspective on it. Focus on the areas God wants to show you. If you desire to look inside yourself, God will allow you to see.
3. Repent, if that is what needs to be done. Be willing to release all of it to the Lord.
4. Ask the Lord to show anything else that may be there that hinders you in your walk with Him. Be willing to leave all the junk with Him. Get rid of the burdens that weigh you down and slow you down.
5. Praise the Lord and thank Him for your release from captivity. He has good things He wants to share with you and for you to share with others that need to be set free.
6. Continue to stay close to the Lord by reading His Word, and communicating with Him in prayer every day. Praise Him for everything. This is where your strength and guidance comes from. Everything you need He has.

Isaiah 40:31

But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not grow weary, They shall walk and not faint.

I would like to urge you to ask the Lord to search your hearts and ask Him what He sees and what He wants to heal in your life today. Don't take the old garbage back home with you. Leave it with the Lord. He already paid, in full, the price to set you totally free. Don't let shame, fear, hate, rejection, unforgiveness, abandonment or any other hurt stay in your life, come and talk to the Lord. He really wants to meet with you, heal you, and embrace you. Receive your freedom today!

One last Scripture for you:

Luke 4:18-19

¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors, ¹⁹ and that the time of the Lord's favor has come.