

Human Trafficking

The sell and trade of God's children

Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt. Genesis 37:26-28

Information:

Human trafficking is a modern day slavery of global proportions. Trafficking is not something that happens only in economically depressed countries but across the globe there is an underground network that brings humans to those who demand labor, services, and sex. In fact, The International Labor Organization, a UN Agency, estimates that there are at least 12.3 million children, women, and men in forced or bonded labor and commercial sex servitude at any given time. Even here in the United States, it is estimated that every year approximately 17,000 people are trafficked into the country and an unknown but significant number of American citizens are sold into sex slavery every year.

Insight:

Contrary to popular belief slavery in the United States has not been abolished but there are many organizations working to make this a part of our past. As people of faith, we are called to help those who have no freedom so that they may live in hope.

Looking closely at this issue is disturbing because we see the depth of human sinfulness. However, the women, men, and children living in slavery require that people look below the surface and ask questions. By bringing this issue to light, Christians will take the first step to becoming an "Abolitionist" church.

Invitation to Act:

Get educated on human trafficking and its far reaching impacts. The Presbyterian Church's website provides educational resources on

human trafficking from a faith perspective as well as information on how the church is working to end human trafficking and provide services to survivors.

Visit www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking for details.

Organize a Bible study by ordering the Thoughtful Christian's publication on sex trafficking. This study could be paired a viewing of the movie, *Human Trafficking* starring Mira Sorvino and Donald Sutherland.

Polaris Project, www.polarisproject.org, offers a wide range of information and resources on human trafficking, including many survivors' stories.

Not for Sale, www.notforsalecampaign.org, offers information on human trafficking, slavery, and how to get involved. Their action items include information for "people of faith" with a focus on becoming an abolitionist church. Other information includes: a list of commonly used items produced through the use of forced and bonded labor and sale of their documentary about human trafficking, *Not for Sale*.



Inquire:

While Joseph succeeded in Egypt and became an integral part of Egyptian society, today's human trafficking victims are not as fortunate. They are among the most vulnerable and because of the global nature of trafficking they face greater barriers due to language and cultural barriers. Hebrews tell us to "remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured." Victims of trafficking are often in the shadows but we are called to remember them in their imprisonment and torture. As Christians we can seek them out and bring light to their struggle for liberation and freedom. This is accomplished through taking action and joining organizations in their effort to end modern day slavery but also through prayer. Please join in prayer for those who live in fear and hope of being discovered.

Holy God who hears the cries of the oppressed, we come to you as if we were the ones in held in slavery. The minutes, hours, days, months all tick by so slowly without relief from bondage. We ask for your presence that we might feel ourselves held in your hands if even for a moment to escape the torture of our emotional and physical abuse. There seems to be no light in this darkness, no hope for our future. Please send help. Allow someone to see me, to look beyond the outward appearance and into my eyes seeing your image. Give them the courage to ask, to help, to save me from this captivity. God, turn the hearts of those responsible for my slavery and help the leaders of countries around the world ensure that this does not happen to another child, woman, or man. It is in the name of the One love, One hope that we pray. Amen.

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