Growth Group Discussion Guide: Freedom

PERSONAL REFLECTION

READ & OBSERVE: Luke 4:16-21, 6:1-10

Luke 4:16–21:

16 When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. **17** The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

18 *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,*
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released (aphesis/deror),
that the blind will see,
that the oppressed will be set free,

19 *and that the time of the Lord's favor has come."*

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me,
for the Lord has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted
and to proclaim that captives will be released (*deror)*
and prisoners will be freed.

Leviticus 25:10
Set this year apart as holy, a time to proclaim freedom *(deror)* throughout the land for all who live there. It will be a jubilee year for you, when each of you may return to the land that belonged to your ancestors and return to your own clan.

20 He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. **21** Then he began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"

The word "release" or "freedom" in the Isaiah passage (Grk. aphesis, "release," or Heb. deror, "Jubilee liberation." is the common word for "forgiveness" here in Luke. It denotes release from burden or bondage. The word in Isaiah 61 is about release from the social consequences of society's collective sin—a freedom from debt, slavery, poverty, and oppression.

What is Jesus telling the people at the synagogue that the mission of his kingdom is all about?

Luke 6:1-10

1 One Sabbath day as Jesus was walking through some grainfields, his disciples broke off heads of grain, rubbed off the husks in their hands, and ate the grain. **2** But some Pharisees said, "Why are you breaking the law by harvesting grain on the Sabbath?"

3 Jesus replied, "Haven't you read in the Scriptures what David did when he and his companions were hungry? **4** He went into the house of God and broke the law by eating the sacred loaves of bread that only the priests can eat. He also gave some to his companions." **5** And Jesus added, "The Son of Man is Lord,

even over the Sabbath."

Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

6 On another Sabbath day, a man with a deformed right hand was in the synagogue while Jesus was teaching. **7** The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees watched Jesus closely. If he healed the man's hand, they planned to accuse him of working on the Sabbath.

8 But Jesus knew their thoughts. He said to the man with the deformed hand, "Come and stand in front of everyone." So the man came forward. **9** Then Jesus said to his critics, "I have a question for you. Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?"

10 He looked around at them one by one and then said to the man, "Hold out your hand." So the man held out his hand, and it was restored! **11** At this, the enemies of Jesus were wild with rage and began to discuss what to do with him.

How is Jesus challenging the Pharisees to enlarge their understanding of true Sabbath rest?

How is Jesus' understanding of Sabbath similar to the kind of 7th day rest that God invited Adam and Eve to enjoy in the Garden of Eden?

Reflection:

The mission of the Kingdom of God is to return the world and humanity to the Sabbath rest of the Garden of Eden. Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection set in motion the eternal Jubilee, ushering in the Kingdom of God.

In what area of your life do you still feel captive to fear, hopelessness, anger, depression, oppression, or disease?

Imaginative Meditation:

Close your eyes and imagine the area of captivity you've been struggling with like shackles around your arms and legs. Do you feel their strangling weightiness?

How have you already sought to rid yourself of this bondage? What paths has your quest taken you down?

Now imagine Jesus coming to you. His light is so bright, it's intensity is like a laser. When you're ready, hold out your hands and feet with their shackles to him. Ask him to set you free.

As His light pierces each shackle, do you hear the loud clunk as they fall to the ground. Now shake your hands and feet. Allow yourself a moment to relish in the lightness and freedom throughout your body.

Now listen to what Jesus might want to say to you about living a life of freedom in His kingdom. What is he releasing you into? Write down what He says to you.

Growth Group Discussion Guide: Freedom

GROUP TIME

ICE-BREAKER:

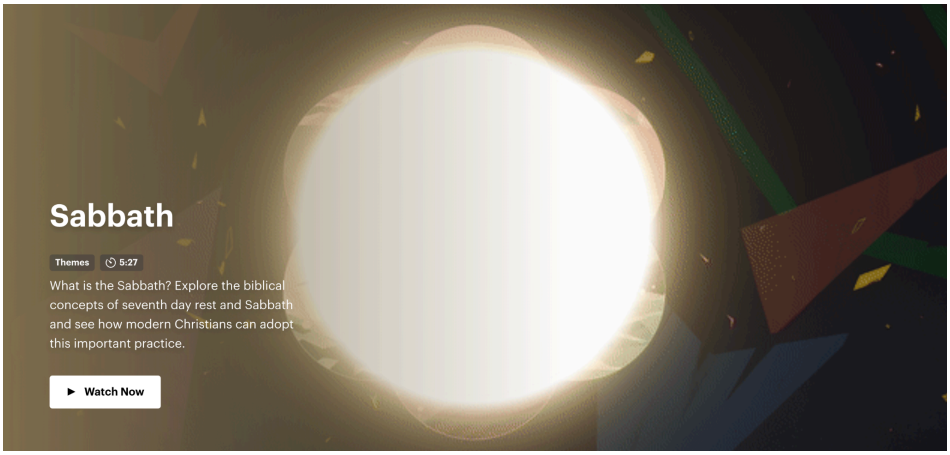
Complete this sentence: "I was once trapped in a _____"

READ: Luke 4:16-21

If your group hasn't already done their own study on this passage in personal time, read this together. Keep in mind that this serves as Jesus' official announcement that he is kicking off his mission.

WATCH: Sabbath by the Bible Project

https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/sabbath-video/



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What connections did the video present between Sabbath rest and the year of Jubilee? What new understanding did it surface for you about the mission of the Kingdom of God?

2. For the Jewish people of the time, they longed for freedom from Roman oppression. In what ways does our culture long for freedom and what idols have we placed our hopes to secure this freedom? In what ways are these idols failing and falling short?

3. While Jesus walked the earth, he gave us a glimpse of what His kingdom looks like. And he invites to live in His Kingdom by placing our trust in His work on the cross. As His followers, what does it mean for us now and when He returns again?

4. If Jesus is the King of kings with full authority to set us free from the debt of our sin and the power of evil, what would embracing his kingship look like? How might your perspectives and priorities take a different shape both internal and externally?