



WEEK 3 FALSE STARTS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

As Jesus heads towards the cross, he stumbles twice and encounters the women of Jerusalem. Unexpectedly, he encourages the women not to weep for him but for themselves and their children. He changes the narrative and points to a deeper issue.

CONSIDER... THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS



1. Jesus falls a second time
2. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
3. Jesus falls for a third time

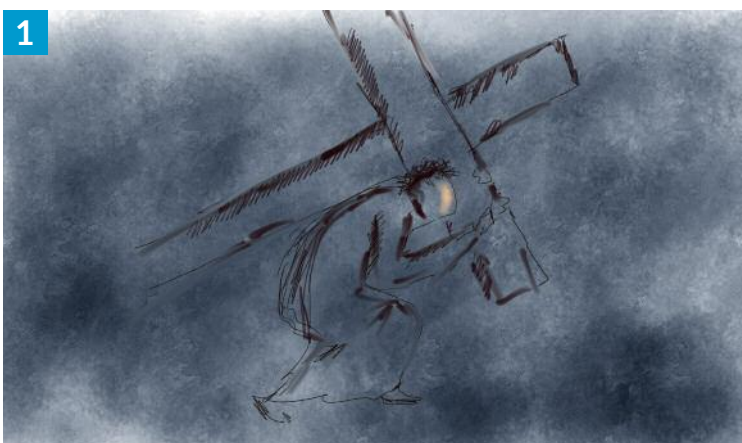
In our modern slavery journey, we too must expect setbacks and challenges. Sometimes, we might be more complicit than we realise, and situations may be more complex than they initially appear.

WATCH FALSE STARTS AND NEW DIRECTIONS



Film questions

- What struck you about Richard and Danny's story?
- What false assumptions did the father make?
- Read John 4:4-52 (the Gospel reading for next Sunday). How does the Samaritan woman journey from shame to new life to confidence? How is this reflected in Richard's story?





- What does that teach you about the complexity of modern slavery and getting alongside victims? What should our expectations be as we begin to take action?
- How might we be better equipped to deal with the hiddenness and intricacies of modern slavery? What should be our starting point? (Remember the challenge to the women of Jerusalem that we must always start with ourselves.)

CONSIDER... THE CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS



- How do these contemporary images help us be honest about modern slavery challenges and setbacks and how we can be complicit in victims falling back



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You need to take a holistic view when fighting modern slavery.

I learnt this when I was in the police. It's not just about one agency or organisation.

It is really important to get all the partners to the table to look at what part each can play.

Sion Hall, Retired Deputy Chief Inspector and Chair of the Pan Lancashire Anti-Slavery Partnership (PLASP)



PRAYER

Spend some time in silence recalling the film.

Holy God, we recognise our own frailties and sinfulness. As we seek your healing and blessing, help us to appreciate and respond to struggle and sometimes wrongdoing in others – that we may become better able to recognise fear, offer forgiveness, and embrace all who are hurting because of abuse or hidden pain into a community sharing your grace and goodness.

Amen.



into exploitation?

NEXT STEPS ON YOUR JOURNEY — THINKING ABOUT PARTNERSHIPS

If you are beginning to think about what you can do as a church, a good first step is to find out what is already going on in your neighbourhood.

Consider mapping your community – put together some large pieces of paper and draw a map of your community, marking out the main roads, rivers, railways, key buildings such as shopping centres, churches, mosques, pubs, and clubs. Then add the resources that already exist, such as buildings, services, leisure activities, centres of faith, and youth and elderly focused activities. Consider the various needs or issues you have in your community and mark those on the map as well. As you add to your map, consider:

- What are the main priorities?
- Who do you need to work with to address



It's not a smooth process doing this kind of work and there are a number of challenges. One of the main challenges is working with volunteers. At the beginning, volunteers are often very enthusiastic but as it gets difficult, people's enthusiasm can, understandably, wane. The challenge is how to keep the passion alive and people motivated. I think it's about trying to focus on the long term vision.

*Bill Crooks, artist and facilitator
for The Clewer Initiative*



this issue?

- Which groups, institutions, clubs and businesses could help?
- What charities or organisations are already working in the area?
- How could you volunteer / support their work? What are the gaps?
- Who are the key figures in your community who you could get to know?
Local police / other statutory agencies / local head teachers.
- How could you convene people with an interest in modern slavery?
- How can you start a conversation?

Not everything will work but as you begin to move forward, you will see the gaps and where you can begin to make a difference.

This exercise is part of The Clewer Initiative's Hidden Voices course. If you would like to build on your initial mapping exercise, why not sign up for a Hidden Voices course?

<https://theclewerinitiative.org/training-and-events/hidden-voices>

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We are seeing a lot more cases of financial exploitation, where people are tricked into going into debt and then held in bondage. Once gangs have a hold over individuals, they apply huge pressure, threats and blackmail and coerce them into online crime.

Local police force involved in the case



FURTHER READING FOR NEXT WEEK

What is financial exploitation?

In today's film, we hear the story of a boy drawn into a criminal network over the internet and forced to defraud his own father. This is an example of financial exploitation. We asked the Threat Leadership Command at National Crime Agency to explain more:

Financial exploitation is where offenders coerce victims into committing financial actions subject to penalty for the exploiter's gain. Exploiters may even set up accounts in the victims' name without their knowledge in order to conduct further transactions and illegal activity.



Financial exploitation is often observed alongside another form of exploitation, such as sexual or labour exploitation, and is used as a further mechanism to control victims and as an additional income stream for exploiters.

Victims are often targeted based on existing vulnerabilities such as age, disability, homelessness, inability to speak English, or any other characteristic that makes them easier to coerce and control, such as having the same nationality as offenders.

In order to financially exploit victims, offenders may:

- Coerce victims into opening bank accounts or providing bank account details that will then be controlled by the exploiter
- Coerce victims into taking out credit cards, loans, mobile phone contracts, overdrafts, or vehicle finance
- Use victims' identities and details for financial transactions linked to criminality so that offenders can distance themselves from criminality. This may include opening additional accounts in victims' names that they may later use to commit fraud against third parties
- Commit benefit fraud by forcing victims to fraudulently claim benefits or claiming benefits in the victim's name unbeknown to them.
- Force victims to have their identities and bank accounts used during the laundering of proceeds of crime.

Financial exploitation has a profound and lasting impact on victims, both psychologically and in terms of financial and credit damage, jeopardising their ability to obtain financial accounts and access credit once the exploitation has ended.



When we investigated the evidence, it became clear that this local teenager had got sucked into an extremely dark and complex serious crime organisation. Criminals are working across the world, luring teenagers and vulnerable adults into unseen crime and leaving them frightened and trapped.

Local police force involved in the case



DAN'S JOURNEY

Dan Pratt is the founder of The Together Free Foundation and helped to establish Southend Against Modern Slavery (SAMS) Partnership. He tells us more about the process and shares some of the challenges of modern slavery activism.

“I started by having conversations with people who I already knew within the community - whether they were church leaders, charity workers, the council, or local police. We thought about what could be a more resilient response within our locality.

“Following lots of one-to-one conversations, we decided to form an anti-slavery partnership and gathered around 30 different community leaders from the third sector, statutory and faith groups, as well as law enforcement.

“There are always challenges in developing community resilience. I found one of the main issues was around awareness and people not realising that exploitation is happening locally. In Southend, there was a whole piece of work to be done around education.

“Overall, I think it was a case of not giving up if people pushed the idea aside but instead persevering. I kept asking people “what are we doing about this?”

“Often it is a case of finding people who are passionate about the issue and working with them. It is about going where the energy is and sometimes that entailed working with people I hadn't anticipated.

“Plans don't always work out as we'd hoped for. It is very much a sense of trying to do our best. And if something doesn't work, then we can just try again. For me, my faith has a massive role to play in keeping me motivated and a sense of me joining in with God's mission of bringing His kingdom and reign on earth. I know that ultimately His Kingdom is a place where there is no slavery, and all people are treated with dignity and respect.”