



WEEK 4 SYSTEMIC FAILURE

Jesus' final moments find him stripped of his clothing, nailed to the cross and in deep despair. There is no light or hope as Jesus breathes his last.

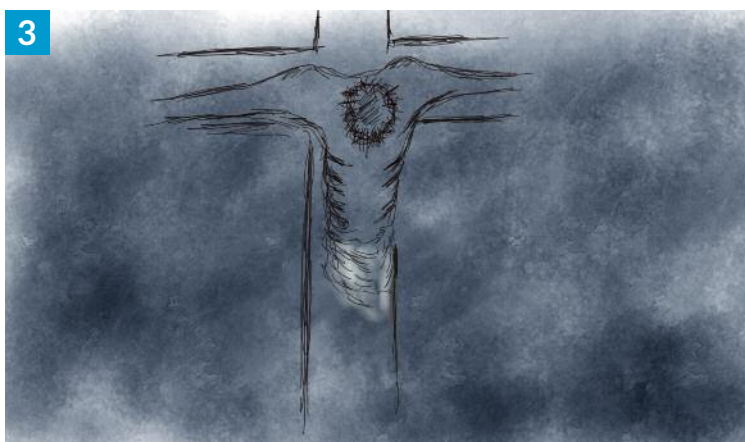
CONSIDER... THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS



1. Jesus is stripped of his clothing
2. Jesus is nailed to the cross
3. Jesus dies on the cross

Many modern slavery victims face a lifetime of misery – exploitation, hunger, verbal abuse, threats, violence, and the belief that there is no way out. They often do not know who to turn to and government systems can fail them. Their suffering goes unnoticed and is fuelled by society's hunger for cheap goods and services, and a lack of care for the most vulnerable.

As we try to build slavery-free communities, we must grapple with the gravity of the situation and the systemic forces at large.





WATCH THE FULL HORROR OF THE CRIME

Film questions



- What were some of the complexities around Rayowa's situation that made it particularly hard for her to be noticed and rescued?
- Why is modern slavery such a challenging crime to identify and tackle?
- Read John 9:1-41 (the Gospel reading for next week). How do we see stubborn blindness in the Pharisees who refuse to notice and change because they are so attached to their systems? How is this a warning to us about how our existing structures and systems may limit how much light we can bring into the darkness of modern slavery?
- How does our contemporary approach to safeguarding help us open our eyes and say "we see you" in a way that is life-changing?



CONSIDER... THE CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS



When you look at these images, how do you see systems crushing the life out of this victim?



PRAYER



Spend some time in silence recalling the film.

Lord of heaven and earth, please help us to better recognise the weaknesses and blind spots of the systems within which we live, especially when they are used to mislead and mistreat people. May we learn to better safeguard those who are vulnerable, and develop our abilities to listen, understand and act for their well-being. We ask for Jesus' sake, who himself was crushed by the systems and blindness of those who believed they knew how best to behave. Amen.

NEXT STEPS ON YOUR JOURNEY – STAYING ON TOP OF SAFEGUARDING



There are increasing numbers of vulnerable people in our churches. From a safeguarding perspective, we need to know what to do if someone walks into our church or social action project and we see signs that are suggestive of slavery. The Clewer Initiative regularly runs the following courses:

- Refugees, safeguarding and modern slavery
- Safeguarding and modern slavery for diocesan safeguarding teams
- Safeguarding and modern slavery for food banks
- County lines training for diocesan safeguarding teams
- Safeguarding and modern slavery for parish safeguarding officers

Sign up for our next course -

<https://theclewerinitiative.org/what-we-do/safeguarding-and-modern-slavery>

Alternatively, you could learn at your own pace via our e-learning module on the Church of England's safeguarding training portal <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/login/index.php>. We have developed an interactive, two part course which will give you a comprehensive understanding of modern slavery and help you learn how to recognise, respond, refer and record concerns. It is suitable for anyone.



FURTHER READING FOR NEXT WEEK



What is domestic servitude?

In the film, we see a young girl trapped in domestic servitude. Domestic servitude is a live-in employment arrangement where the employee cannot leave of their own free will. It is a form of forced labour which sometimes also involves debt bondage. It can be hard for authorities to inspect private homes and so this type of exploitation can be easier to hide. The 'employer' may hold the worker's travel or identity documents, use the threat of deportation, and exploit other vulnerabilities such as language barriers, as a means of control.



Most of us are colluding with modern slavery as consumers. From the clothes we wear through to the phones we have, the coffee we drink and the chocolates we eat.

Rev'd Dr Dan Pratt, Founder of The Together Free Foundation

SIGNS OF DOMESTIC SERVITUDE



DO THEY WORK VERY LONG HOURS?

Or seem to be on call at all hours



HAVE THEIR PASSPORTS OR DOCUMENTS BEEN TAKEN AWAY?



DO THEY EVER LEAVE THE HOUSE ON THEIR OWN?



DO THEY APPEAR AFRAID OR ANXIOUS?



WHAT CONDITIONS ARE THEY LIVING IN?

Are there signs that they have been harmed or deprived of medical care, food, water or sleep?



DO THEY STAND OUT FROM OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS?

Are they wearing poorer clothing, quieter, more withdrawn etc?



CAN THEY FREELY CONTACT FRIENDS OR FAMILY?



BECCA'S JOURNEY

Becca is the Diocese of Gloucester's Safeguarding Officer and delivers some of The Clewer Initiative's safeguarding training. She used to work as a children's nurse and for the NSPCC. We talked to her about her role and why she is passionate about safeguarding.

She explains: "I believe everyone has a right to flourish as an individual. I believe this from a human rights perspective and a Biblical perspective. Everyone is made in God's image and should be valued. Anything that goes against that, whether that be abuse or modern slavery, is wrong and anything I can do to protect and inform people of their rights is important to me. I feel I am called to work in safeguarding. I don't think I could do it without my faith. It's a really hard job to do sometimes.

"Safeguarding is so important. It is a key way in which we can protect vulnerable people from potential abuse and identify and support victims.

"All churches have safeguarding policies and processes in place. Modern slavery is just another form of abuse for people to know about. We are not asking people to do anything different or extra. It shouldn't be burdensome because the safeguarding processes are already in place.

"Safeguarding isn't just something for specialists or church safeguarding officers. Absolutely everybody needs to have a basic awareness of it and in that way, we can make our communities a lot safer.

"One of the things that really saddens me is when the systems don't work properly and people don't report. Someone might think "I only see this person once a week or maybe what I witnessed was just a one off." It is really important that we do something with that information. We must bring this darkness out into the light."