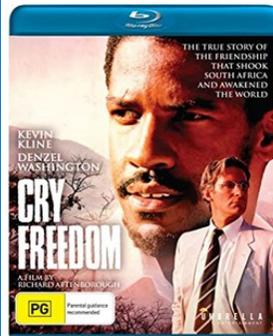


SUNDAY 15TH NOVEMBER

*Thought for the Week: "What does it mean to be truly free?"*

This week in our Worship and in our Daily Discipleship we return to the themes in John's Gospel that we have been exploring over these last couple of months. And for the next fortnight we are going to look at the them of "Freedom."



I'm of an age where I can still remember a film coming out in the 1980's called "Cry Freedom, which told the true story of an inspirational young black social reformer called Steve Biko in South Africa at the time of Apartheid alongside the likes of the then young Nelson Mandela. How he stood up to the unjust power structures of his day with a keenness of mind and a sharpness of eye, and a rhetoric to match. How he came to the attention of the police authorities, how he was arrested, beaten, and eventually died from his injuries, how so often in the cases of power everything was covered up by the same authorities in order to save face until such time as the truth was brought to light by a young white South African journalist called Donald Woods. I can remember the shock waves that reverberated around the world, not just South Africa, at the time. It seemed as though just perhaps the world was changing, a former age of discrimination and Apartheid was coming to an end, and a new age and a new world was dawning. Actually it took well into the 1990's for this to become a reality, and there would perhaps be many around the world, not least in the United States, who would say "the Struggle" as it was known, still goes on.

So is that what "freedom" is, freedom from the things that hold us back, whether it be because of the judgement of others because of the colour of our skin, our gender, whether we are gay, straight, where we come from in terms of our heritage, our nationality, our faith, or our lack of it, our social status, our economic background, the fact that we have additional needs, the list goes on and on, it is almost endless.

Is that what freedom is? Many activists would probably shout "yes" and take to the streets and dedicate their lives to fighting for it. And without their help probably nothing otherwise structurally would change – working towards equality for pay, employment rights, the 'living' wage, rights against exploitation of many different marginalised groups whether individuals or communities, or whole peoples and nations – the recent genocide of the Rohingya people in Myanmar (formerly Burma) comes to mind. But just when one injustice seems to be highlighted and even overcome, sadly, another, or even tens of others, rears their ugly head like a mythological serpent, wounded but never seemingly defeated.

And it can feel the same within our own world and within ourselves. Freedom from debt, freedom from health issues, freedom from inner anxiety, self-doubt and feeling of low self-worth, freedom from guilt, freedom from many things. We long for just one "cloudless," "sunshiny," and "perfect" day. Is that the moment when we eventually become "free?"

### Friends of St. Andrew's, Congresbury—Christmas Cakes

By popular demand, the Friends of St. Andrew's, Congresbury WILL be selling their Christmas cakes this year.

Many orders have already been received and Jenny is busily making the 7-inch fruit Christmas Cakes that would normally be sold at the Friends coffee morning.

To avoid disappointment—order yours early.

Price—£7.50

Warning—Contains nuts

Contact Jenny on Tel: 01934 833770

Email: thelangsatkedron@btinternet.com

All proceeds go to The Friends of St. Andrew's Church.



### Supporting the Churches Financially at this time.

In this time of economic uncertainty, it is difficult to think about giving money to the churches, but here are a few ways that you can help us.

#### To all St Andrews Church, Congresbury supporters,

At this time of mass shopping on-line – especially in the run up to Christmas and through Lockdown 2 – the Church would be grateful if would you consider using "easyfundraising". Using 'easyfundraising' can turn your everyday online shopping into FREE donations to the church with NO cost to yourself. No catch. No hidden charge. No hassle.

Please register using this unique link - just search for 'St Andrew's Church - Congresbury' and click support us -

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stacongresbury/?invite=284WS8&referral-campaign=c2s>

If you accept "Donation Reminder" on the site your browser will automatically prompt you to use the app. Thank you for your support.

Further details can always be found on our website [www.newcreationchurches.org.uk](http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk), along with the New Creation, Love Banwell and Love Congresbury Facebook pages, particularly regarding charitable giving and food/essential donations at his time.

[www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches](https://www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches)

[www.facebook.com/lovebanwell](https://www.facebook.com/lovebanwell)

[www.facebook.com/LoveCongresbury](https://www.facebook.com/LoveCongresbury)

**Monetary donations can always be made direct to the churches either by bank transfer or cheque.**

Details are as for the Marcus Rashford Initiative.

**Please look out for updates and thank you all for your continued support and generosity.**



**Launch of our Christmas Page on the website.**

**Snap the QR code to go directly to the page or visit [www.newcreationchurches.org.uk](http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk) for more details.**

Again, many would claim to say “yes,” when we can buy that “thing” or “fashion accessory” that will just make us happy, when we can just get to “go on holiday” and sit beside the pool in the sun, when we can cuddle up by the fire and “put Strictly on” and forget all our problems, then we are told “we will be free.” The problem is such freedom is often only for an instant, the credit card bill gets bigger, the anxiety kicks back in as the holiday ends, and the dream of strictly all too soon is over for another week or even another year.

The Bible, and indeed faith, offer perhaps a different take on where and how to find “freedom.” They do have a similar understanding and strain loosely aligned to “Freedom from” things in the form of the great Old Testament Exodus story, not just in the time of Moses, but throughout the whole piece. Freedom from the Romans, freedom from Herod, freedom from Pharaoh, freedom from slavery etc. In the New Testament

But there is also another understanding of freedom also within the Bible, and within faith, and that is “freedom to” things, and more importantly a “freedom to someone.” Its captured in the Old Testament by the way the Israelite people are taking out into “the wilderness” of the Sinai desert for forty years and there are given the Tabernacle, the “Tent of Meeting” as a place where God and the world met. In the New Testament, its captured by the many “communion” type moments, moments of connection Jesus has with His disciples but also with so many individuals and with the crowds, the Last Supper, but also the Foot Washing, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Healings, and ultimately the Cross. Here, strangely, amongst all the violence, the blood, sweat and tears, the “freedom to” discover the very purest and most beautiful moment of history – that we are ultimately profoundly accepted and loved.

We get so far by exploring and even championing our “freedom from” things and even by seeking to change the world. But, I would suggest, we only really go further when we choose discover what we wish to do with our “freedom to” do with our lives, not just when we eventually have the perfect day and we are “finally free” from all our worries, but in the midst of all our worries, our fears, our less than perfect days, the midst of right here and right now. When we can discover this freedom, the willingness “to let ourselves be loved” for who we are by a God who so clearly does truly love us, well then “we have freedom indeed.”

Matt Thomson

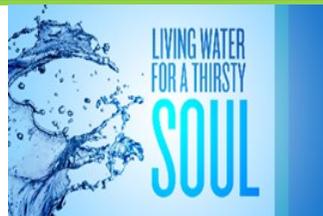


Mary and John the Disciple at the Cross (John 19:25-36)

### Daily Blog – What’s happening this week?

These two weeks we are going to continue our “Themes in John’s Gospel” by looking at the theme of Freedom, the freedom Mary and John the disciple discovered strangely at the Cross (John 19:25-36).

If you would like to follow the Daily Blog as part of your journey of faith, you can access via the “New Creation Facebook Page” : <https://www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches/>, via the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/> or New Creation YouTube Channel : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXn34qIXIXBeOAmO1M1KbBw/>



### Second Lockdown:

As we continue in Lockdown **Sunday Services will need to be online only for the time being** – Howard and myself, and the technology team, are able to Livestream the service each week from our two Churches so this week we will be in **Banwell**, and next week in **Congresbury**, where we will continue our journey through the themes of John’s Gospel. So please join us for a simple service that will seek to include those at home and will last approximately fifty minutes.

You can access the Service by watching us **LIVE** via the “New Creation Facebook Page” : <https://www.facebook.com/NewCreationChurches/> or catch up later on Facebook, via the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/> or New Creation YouTube Channel : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXn34qIXIXBeOAmO1M1KbBw/>

### And afterwards, join us for our NEW ‘Virtual’ Coffee catch up.

Afterwards, why not join us for the next of our ‘virtual’ Coffee and catch up? Click the URL below, see further details on our New Creation Facebook page or click on the link that will be posted in the live chat during Sunday’s service.

Virtual Coffee Morning Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81722148561>

### Details of How to share in an Agape Feast at Home:

Some people have kindly asked if they can share in an Agape Meal at Home either after the Live Stream service on a Sunday morning or at some other point during the week? Kirsty has kindly put a link to the words we have used during the various times we have shared similar meals as part of the Service on a Sunday on the New Creation website: <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/>

The good news is that the two Church Buildings are able to be open each day for personal prayer, to light a candle to remember a loved one, and to sit and to be, and to pray.



### Giving to the LOCAL Marcus Rashford Initiative :

We continue to work with local traders, schools and organisations to help families in need over Christmas. Beth Ashton-Hilton continues to be happy to manage small financial gifts towards supporting this project which we are calling the “Local Marcus Rashford Initiative.”



Keep an eye out on <http://www.newcreationchurches.org.uk/> for updates as well as the Love Banwell and Love Congresbury Facebook pages. Financial donations can be given in the following ways and can be Gift Aided if you are a taxpayer. Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

#### Love Congresbury

Cheques can be made payable to **St. Andrew’s Congresbury PCC**  
Electronic Bank Transfer: Bank: **NatWest** Sort Code: **60-23-32** Account No: **72280484**

#### Love Banwell

Cheques can be made payable to **Parochial Church Council of Banwell**  
Electronic bank transfers: Bank: **NatWest** Sort Code: **60-23-32** Account No: **41720210**