

- In many ways, lock down has taken freedom away from people. However, there is absolutely nothing as liberating as the freedom that a life surrendered to Jesus brings. Yet, we're still bound to make a choice:

**JOHN 8:32(NLTSE)** And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

**JOHN 8:36(NLTSE)** So if the Son sets you free, you are *truly free*

- With great freedom, comes great responsibility
- Eleanor Roosevelt said: "Freedom makes a huge requirement of every human being. With freedom comes responsibility. For the person who is unwilling to grow up, the person who does not want to carry his own weight, this is a frightening prospect"

**LUKE 12:48b(NLTSE)** When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required

- What are the major choices of life we face? Scripture makes it plain to see:

**DEUTERONOMY 30:15-19(NLTSE)** " Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster. For I command you this day to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy.

" But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.

" Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!"

- The freedom the we've been given in Jesus, is the freedom to chose Him. To choose life. To chose His life
- Not making a decision, is also a decision:

**MATTHEW 27:34(NLTSE)** Pilate saw that he wasn't getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, " I am innocent of this man's blood. The responsibility is yours!"

- Pilate remains responsible for not making the decision he could have

**PROVERBS 24:12(NLT)** Don't try to avoid responsibility by saying you didn't know about it. For God knows all hearts and He sees you. He keeps watch over your soul and He knows you knew. And he will judge all people according to what they have done.

- Our decisions, always effects the lives of others. This is dramatically displayed in the life of Jonah:

**JONAH 1:1-12(NLTSE)** "The LORD gave this *message to Jonah* son of Amittai: " Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its

people are.”

But Jonah got up and went in the **opposite direction** to get away from the LORD. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to **escape from the LORD** by sailing to Tarshish.

But **the LORD hurled a powerful wind over the sea**, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. Fearing for their lives, the **desperate sailors** shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. But all this time **Jonah was sound asleep** down in the hold. So the captain went down after him. “How can you sleep at a time like this?” he shouted. “Get up and pray to your god! Maybe he will pay attention to us and spare our lives.” Then the crew cast lots to see which of them had offended the gods and caused the terrible storm. When they did this, the lots identified Jonah as the culprit. “Why has this awful storm come down on us?” they demanded. “Who are you? What is your line of work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?”

Jonah answered, “I am a Hebrew, and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.”

The sailors were terrified when they heard this, for he had already told them he was running away from the LORD. “Oh, why did you do it?” they groaned. And since the storm was getting worse all the time, they asked him, “What should we do to you to stop this storm?”

“Throw me into the sea,” Jonah said, “and it will become calm again. **I know that this terrible storm is all my fault.**”

#### Seven points from Jonah's story:

1. **message to Jonah:** God's instruction to us is plain and simple
2. **opposite direction:** opposing God's direction gets us into a mess
3. **escape from the LORD:** running from God, doesn't change His plan for you
4. **the LORD hurled a powerful wind over the sea:** sometimes, God sends storms to get our attention
5. **desperate sailors:** our decisions effect others
6. **Jonah was sound asleep:** don't avoid responsibility
7. **I know that this terrible storm is all my fault:** repentance brings wonderful results (Nineveh's salvation)

- Our accountability before God, is not only for our lives, but how it effects the lives of others.
- Our accountability before God, is not only for our lives, but for the life of Jesus. In other words: “what have we done with God's son Jesus?”
- How have we handled there freedom we've been given?

#### **CARE GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. In what way, if any can freedom be restrictive?
2. Describe some of the ways, in which Jesus sets us free. Free from what exactly?
3. What decisions have we made, that have negatively or positively, effected the lives of others?