



Healing & Wholeness #4

Deliverance and Freedom

w/c 28 September 2025

"Love is the present virtue in which believers anticipate, and practise, the life of the ultimate age to come." (Tom Wright)

"Deliverance, *noun*, liberation, release" (Chambers). One may be released from prison, but more generally we think of things being released for a purpose, to accomplish something. Similarly, the New Testament message makes clear that our freedom is not just for ourselves but that we might serve. We are freed *for* that just as much as we have been freed *from* sin.

Biblical wholeness then takes us beyond the idea of Christianity simply providing a divine escape plan. It helps us focus more on what we do do and less on what we don't. The aim surely is to increase the amount of God's peace, of *shalom*, in the world.

That Hebrew word speaks of a person being uninjured and safe, whole and sound. It calls to mind the reconciliation of all things to God through the work of Christ. See Colossians 1:19–20. Such *shalom* will bring peace to all our dimensions: physical, psychological, social, and spiritual. It is our restoration. Paul also reminds us that we have a *God of peace* (1 Thessalonians 5:23) and therefore that we are to proclaim and live a *gospel of peace* (Ephesians 6:15).

Using the Discovery questions again – with this week's theme in mind – read our passages for today (**Psalm 107:1–22 and Luke 4:31–37**). Then, share your thoughts together:

What does this story tell me about God?

What does it tell me about human life?

If this really is God's word, what will I do as a response to it?

Who am I going to tell about what I have learned from this?

Psalm 107 describes how groups in need called on the Lord and received his salvation, his deliverance. How might we avoid implying that those still in such need – be they hungry, ill, or downtrodden – have not truly cried out to the Lord?

For both Luke and Mark the event we've just read about is used to denote the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Matthew, presumably, contains it within his summary at the end of chapter 4. He though launches into the meat of his gospel with the Sermon of the Mount. For John, any scene-setting and preamble are followed by the wedding at Cana. Why do you think they each take these the different approaches?

As we reflect on this subject it is good to remember that that wholeness and *shalom* are more than personal. We need to – in Jeremiah's words – "...seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile." (Jeremiah 29:7). In the somewhat feverish political atmosphere of today, how can the church practically and sensibly address this?

"Whatever the capacity for human suffering, the church has a greater capacity for healing and wholeness." (Bill Hybels)