

RIVER OF JUSTICE

A message of hope in the fight
against modern slavery

According to recent reports, there are over **45 million men, women, and children enslaved worldwide** through sex trafficking, forced labor slavery and other forms of modern day slavery. Confronted with these realities it is easy to fall into despair. However, there is reason for hope. It is a hope grounded on the power of God and the amazing work of local leaders and organizations, what we call “justice ventures,” working with others around the globe to fight against the evil of slavery. This hope is embodied in the powerful river imagery from the book of Amos. The prophet condemns the nations for taking captive whole communities, selling the innocent and the needy for silver.

“let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never failing stream.”

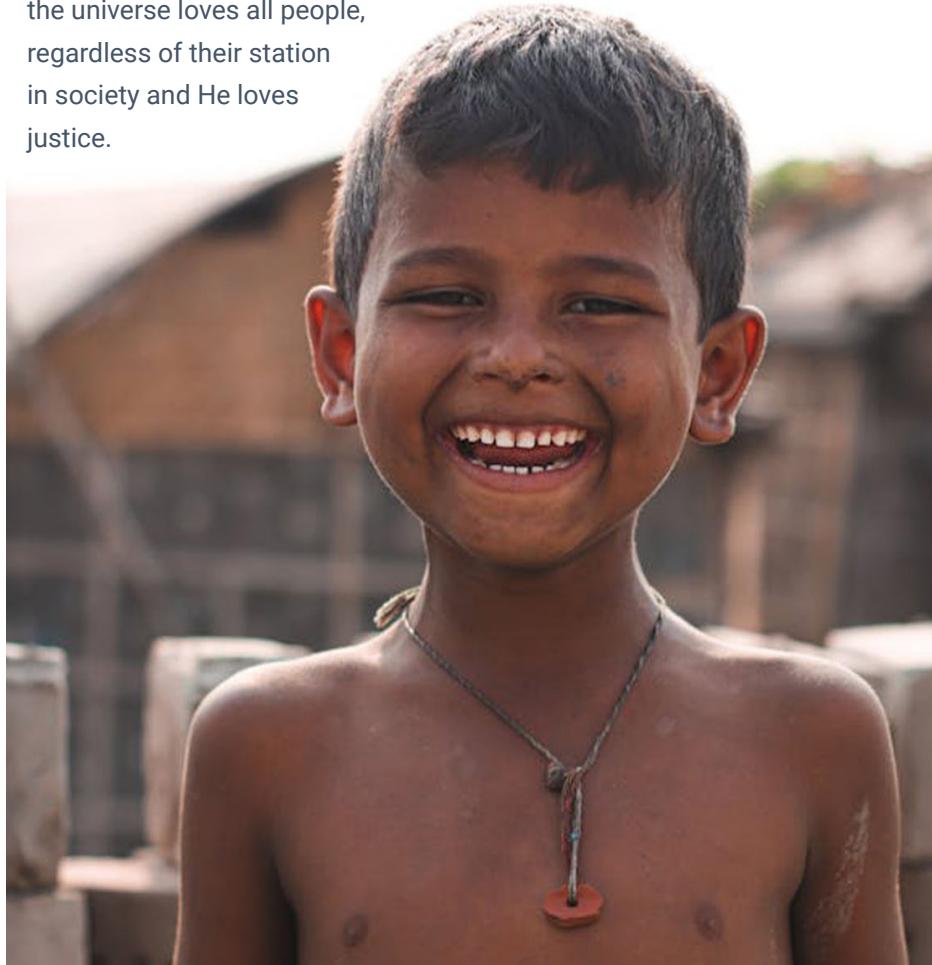
Amos 5:24



JVI derives its logo from this powerful river imagery.

And when it comes to the issue of slavery, we are seeing a growing River of Justice that is beginning to flow across our world today. This river will ultimately wash away the scourge of slavery by the power of a loving God working with and through people like you and me to free the captives, fight the traffickers, and bring lasting restoration and protection to those vulnerable to slavery. So let me tell you about this River of Justice. All great rivers have a source, tributaries, and branches.

The source of this River of Justice in the fight against modern day slavery is the Living God Himself. The God of the universe loves all people, regardless of their station in society and He loves justice.





From a Christian perspective, justice can be defined as the exercise of power and authority to order society according to God's standards of love. Put more simply, justice is the order that God's love requires. We see this perfect order of society in Genesis, the very first book of the Bible, where interestingly enough we also hear about a river. Genesis says that God created man and woman in His own image... He blessed them... He saw that all He had made was very good. We learn that God planted a garden in Eden and there was a river watering the garden and flowing from Eden.



But we know what happens. Due to sin, men and women became separated from God. However, the God who loves people and loves justice did not abandon His creation. Despite this separation, He continued to point us to His perfect standards of love and justice.

We see this in the Mosaic legislation, the Ten Commandments, and the Year of Jubilee. We see it in laws related to the release of debts and slaves. And we see it in the teachings of the Prophets, the passages from Amos, the call to seek justice from Isaiah, and the command to do justice from Micah.

There are three powerful tributaries in this river of justice

1. A savior who changed the world;
2. A spirit who empowers us to do justice; and
3. A swelling abolitionist movement working in partnership.

FIRST, A SAVIOR WHO CHANGED THE WORLD

Jesus Christ changed the world through

- a. His teachings;
- b. His living example of how to love others; and
- c. His death and resurrection on the cross.



Jesus cared greatly for those suffering from abuse and oppression as seen throughout Scripture. We see this when He announces His public ministry in the book of Luke saying that "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor... to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

We see it in the Great Commandment to "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39). We see it in the parable of the Good Samaritan and we see it in His teachings about the sheep and the goats where He commands us to "care for the least" and teaches that as we do so we are doing it as unto Him (Matthew 25:31-46).

Jesus also demonstrated His love and care for the vulnerable and outcasts. He engaged with people at every level of the social strata and of different traditions and world views. For example, we see this care for others in Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well as recorded in John 4.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" For Jews did not associate with Samaritans. They were considered second-class citizens. Nor was it common for men to even speak to women in this context. Moreover, we learn that this woman had a checkered past.



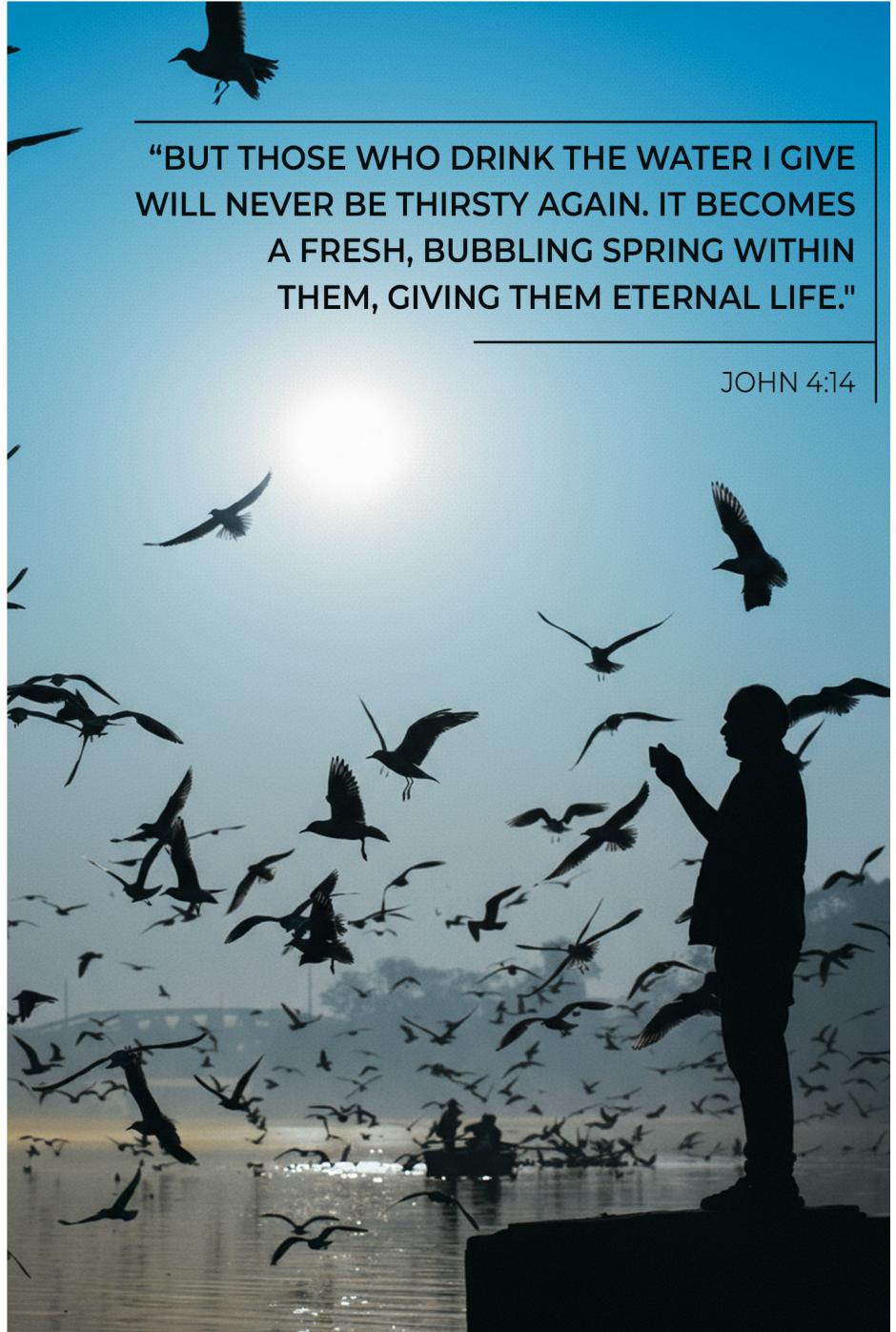
She had been rejected by five husbands and was now living with another outside of marriage. He said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water." "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." He treated her with love and respect.

In the fight against modern slavery, Jesus calls us to do the same as we care for women, men and children held captive in oppressive and abusive conditions.

As you observe Jesus' love and care for the Samaritan woman, note also the "river-like" water imagery in His discussion with her. When Jesus refers to this spring of living water He is referring to the eternal life that is promised to all who believe that He is God in the flesh, that He died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for our sins, an amazing gift of love for the world.

As the Scripture says, "Greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for his brother" (John 15:13). It is in response to His great love for us demonstrated on the cross that we are compelled to love those around us who are suffering, including those at the very bottom of society, those who today are trapped in sex trafficking, forced labor slavery and other forms of modern day slavery. So the first powerful tributary that feeds this River of Justice in the fight against slavery, is Jesus Christ, the God-Man, and His amazing teachings about justice, His living example of love on earth, and His sacrificial death on the cross and promise of life eternal for those who believe.





“BUT THOSE WHO DRINK THE WATER I GIVE
WILL NEVER BE THIRSTY AGAIN. IT BECOMES
A FRESH, BUBBLING SPRING WITHIN
THEM, GIVING THEM ETERNAL LIFE.”

JOHN 4:14

THE SECOND POWERFUL TRIBUTARY IN THIS RIVER OF JUSTICE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT

In John 7 we see Jesus continuing with this powerful imagery of living water when He speaks on the last day of the Feast of the Tabernacles. He stands and says, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive.

What role does this "river of living water," the Holy Spirit, have in fighting modern day slavery?

The Holy Spirit gives us the power to do justice. In John 14, Jesus says... "I will not leave you as orphans; ... But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things." When we place our faith in Jesus, God gives us His Holy Spirit to guide, direct and empower us to do good works.



We need this power in the face of the daunting challenge of abuse and violent oppression that is modern day slavery. If we take on this battle on our own, we are destined for burnout. But with the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will actually be renewed, empowered and invigorated. For it is as we lose our life in serving others that we actually find our life. In fact, in the 58th Chapter of Isaiah, it says that as we loosen the chains of injustice and set the oppressed free that:

- our light will break forth like the dawn;
- we will call and the Lord will say Here I am;
- He will guide us always and strengthen our frame;
- we will be like a well-watered garden;
- like a spring whose waters never fail.

When we do face difficulties, as we most certainly will, we can rest in Him, knowing, that (as it says in Zechariah 4:6) "it is not by our power and might but by God's Spirit that we will ultimately find victory."



THE THIRD TRIBUTARY IN THIS RIVER OF JUSTICE IS A SWELLING ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We call this movement the **POWER OF ONE** because a movement starts and then grows with the action of one and then another individual, and it then grows into a powerful force, as those one individuals come together as one, to fight modern day slavery.

It's the **POWER OF ONE** young women standing up to her pimp and reaching out for help.

It's the **POWER OF ONE** man after living in multi-generational slavery demanding his freedom.

It's the **POWER OF ONE** young boy who courageously tells the truth about how he was forced to work as a slave.

It's the **POWER OF ONE** local leader of one local organization taking risks to uncover slavery and secure freedom.

It's the **POWER OF ONE** government official who stands for justice in the face of pressure to take a bribe or turn a blind eye to those held in slavery.

It's the **POWER OF ONE** entrepreneur or business leader who changes his or her business to create opportunities for former slaves or ensures their supply chain is slave-free.

And it's the **POWER OF YOU AND ME**, acting through prayer, through service and through generous giving in the fight for freedom from slavery.

But the idea of the **POWER OF ONE** doesn't just mean one individual taking a stand against injustice. It also means working together as one—in a spirit of unity and partnership against the violent and oppressive conditions of modern day slavery.

It is this spirit of partnership that is at the heart of the work of JVI.

Our experience has taught us that the work of justice is sustainable only if embraced and led by individuals and organizations in local communities where the injustice occurs. As such, JVI is committed to pursuing justice through local and global partnership—fostering justice solutions in collaboration with local churches, NGOs, businesses, and government officials, while forging positive relationships with other public and private stakeholders - volunteers, donors, investors and advocates located throughout the world.



The JVI model has proven effective. Working through partnership we have secured justice for thousands through legal case work, human rights training, and advocacy while strengthening the justice capacity of churches, nonprofit organizations and businesses to secure justice for tens of thousands more.

A CONFLUENCE OF POWER FOR JUSTICE

Now when tributaries in a river come together at a single point, you have what is called a confluence.

In the case of this River of Justice, it is the confluence of these three powerful tributaries:

- 1. A SAVIOR WHO CHANGED THE WORLD;**
- 2. A SPIRIT WHO EMPOWERS US TO DO JUSTICE, AND;**
- 3. A SWELLING ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT, THAT COME TOGETHER IN A POWERFUL FORCE FOR CHANGE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SLAVERY**



While we still have a huge task ahead of us, we know how the story will end. In Revelation, the last book of the Bible, we see that "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."....in its place there will be a new order established according to God's standards of love. At the very center of the City of God there will be a river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God.

Will you join us in this fight? Through partnership at the local and global level and with God's help we can ensure that justice does roll on like a river, washing away the tragic and horrific practices of modern day slavery.



