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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**September 25, 2016**

**Freedom Sunday**

**Selected Scriptures**

**Prayer:** *Father God, we do again praise you and thank you for the privilege we have, the privilege we exercise every single week of coming before you for corporate worship. Father, I thank you for giving us the freedom to exercise that ability. And Father, again we just so easily take it for granted, and this Sunday is a Sunday that we dedicate towards those people who don't have those freedoms. And Father, we just pray, I pray specifically that your Holy Spirit would be touching us as we look into your word, as we look into what exists in this world for those who don't have that freedom, that you would touch us in a very mighty way that it again would be of permanent value. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

The Catholic church draws a distinction between two very different kinds of ignorance. There is vincible and there is invincible ignorance. One you are responsible for; the other one you are not. R.C. Sproul explains it this way, he said, if you got caught going through a red light and you try to say, "Well, I'm from another state, I didn't realize that here in this state red means stop and

green means go," you'd have a really tough time explaining that in court and you'd get nowhere because everyone knows you're responsible for knowing that red means "stop" and green means "go." Your ignorance is vincible, it's conquerable, there's no excuse. If however you wound up getting a ticket by driving through a little backwater town that wanted to make some money by changing their law so that the day you arrived in town they posted a policeman at every stop light to enforce a brand new law that said, "In our town for this weekend, green means 'stop,' and red means 'go,'" well, there's no court in the land who would ever convict you because that is a case of invincible ignorance, ignorance you'd have no control over whatsoever.

Well today is "freedom Sunday." It is the day given to attacking the vincible ignorance that surrounds and sometimes envelopes the world of slavery. It is a Sunday set aside for churches to recognize the plight of those who have no freedom, those who are enslaved politically, economically, judicially, and sexually.

So first of all some jarring facts about slavery itself. Number one, 45.8 million people are held in slavery today. That's more than any time in the history of slavery itself. There are 2 million children who are enslaved for their labor for their bodies. If you ask why is this so, the simple answer is just follow the

money. Slavery generates over \$150 billion a year. And one of the primary reasons why slavery exists is because much of the world lives in ignorance of it. But this is not an invincible ignorance. It is not an ignorance for which we have an excuse. In fact much of the solution to finding an end to slavery lies in more and more people recognizing the horror that frankly most of us have been ignorant of and then using that knowledge to pray, to send, and go to the places where slavery still exists.

We are connected to IJM and first I want to give you an explanation as to how that happened. I got a phone call about eight years ago from my sister asking me to pray for my niece Lori Beth. She was going to be interviewed by this organization that was called IJM, the International Justice Mission. And she was told that the interview itself was going to be a grueling process, take many, many hours, it would involve her personal testimony, it would involve a series of books she was expected to have read and a lengthy discussion about her worldview. And she was very anxious to join this organization. And she knew it was highly competitive, even though it was located in downtown Washington D.C., it had very strict guidelines about your behavior. There was no salary other than what support you could raise. There was no housing at all and in addition to all of that, they had a fairly strict dress code. I would hardly call those strong selling points. And yet IJM had the

best and the brightest of young people that were clamoring, clamoring for an opportunity to serve there. And I think the best possible explanation for that was that the Holy Spirit was behind it all.

God had raised up a man and a ministry that was telling the evangelical church that when it came to the idea of justice, they were sadly uninformed, uninvolved and, yes, ignorant. The man's name was Gary Haugen. He was a Harvard trained evangelical Christian working as a lawyer for the Justice Department. And as he put it, he was a lot like us. He was living a very comfortable suburban life-style with a Honda Civic, twin girls, and a ministry that included being a sixth grade Sunday school teacher. Gary was trying to integrate his faith life with his daily routine of comfortable suburban living when God just began to rework his paradigm. And he pointed out that he knew, like we all do, that bad things happen all the time. But there's a difference, there's a difference in how we receive it. You see, we may know that there's bad news out there, but it is seldom real. You see, there's a difference between knowing about the Holocaust and being involved in a random assault. I mean most situations are bad, most situations are true, but only one of those is personally real.

All through the spring and the summer of 1994, Gary Haugen heard

the bad news about what was going on in the African country of Rwanda. And many that year heard for the very first time about the Hutus and the Tutsis and the genocide that was taking place there. And Gary at that time was an employee of the Justice Department, and he was lent by that department to the UN investigative team that was sent to identify the sites and the sounds of the 500,000 Tutsis, mostly women and children, who had been hacked to death by the Hutus. They had been herded into churches, they'd been herded into stadiums and there'd been butchers with machetes, with spears, and with clubs, and Haugen's job was to verify the horror up close and personal. And so for Gary Haugen, the bad news was true and it was as real as the sight and the stench and the horror of thousands and thousands of bodies just stacked up like cordwood directly in front of him.

For Gary it was an existential dichotomy. It was a split between two very, very different worlds. His mind knew and understood this world of suburban Washington, of Sunday school and of Honda Civics, and yet now his eyes, his nose, and his ears were in Kibuye, Rwanda, taking in the smell of rotting flesh, seeing hacked bodies and hearing the buzz of a million flies. He could flash on his memories of his twin girls while standing in the thick stench of murder. And after he came back, he would experience the very same thing in the opposite side, there would be these split screens

where standing in this safe suburban environment, he would suddenly have this interposed image that looked as close as one could imagine to what hell must be like. Well, God put Gary Haugen into both of those worlds and he did it for a reason.

And Gary Haugen is us. You see, the closest most of us ever come to existential horror is really in the movies. But real horror is a real part of this fallen world that most of us choose to ignore. In his book *Good News About Injustice*, Haugen talks about how easy it is to ignore all of the bad news in this world. And he spoke of this concept of "our fair garden." And he said "our fair garden" is kind of the way we order our world. It's what we see when we look out our own backyards. He said we have a tendency to extrapolate, we have a tendency to see our backyard as the norm. We like to pretend that that's what the real world is like. And our problem, he says, is that America has the fairest garden of them all. And Haugen quotes St. Cyprian of the third century who captured the concept of "our fair garden" when he wrote to a friend this. He said: "This seems a cheerful world when I view it from this fair garden under the shadow of these vines, but if I climbed some great mountain and looked out over the wide lands, you know very well what I would see. Brigands on the high roads, pirates on the seas, in the amphitheaters men murdered to please the applauding crowds, under all roofs, misery and selfishness. It

really is a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world.

Well how bad this world really is is still a huge shock to us. But it's never been a surprise to God. God says in *Romans 8:22*: *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of child birth until now.* And the groans of this fallen world often are the cries of the innocent and the powerless and Gary Haugen found himself thrust into their world. But God gave Gary Haugen the ability to do something about it. He left the Justice Department and he began to contact mission groups from World Vision to Wycliffe Bible translators, and he asked them to become the "eyes and the ears" of the "no longer ignorant," forming the network to expose injustice. He formed IJM to consist of highly trained staffs of cops, lawyers, detectives, and judges, and he wanted only the very best. I mean he wanted people who knew that moving into this arena would be a step down economically and not a step up. And they would begin the process of evaluating cases of child prostitution in Cambodia or child labor in India or the murder of street children in Brazil and to seek to bring God's justice to those who had been denied it.

Haugen summed up his ministry in his book: *Just courage: God's Great Expectation for the Restless Christian*. He said: "We are a collection of Christian lawyers, criminal investigators, social

workers, and advocates. We rescue victims of violence, sexual exploitation, slavery, and oppression around the world. I started out as IJM'S first employee in 1997 and now we have about 300 full-time staff around the world, most of whom are nationals working in their own communities in the developing world." God speaks in this book of how he, God himself, enlarged Gary's capacity to see this world's evil as real. And in doing that, finding God in some of the worst places on earth, this is what he says. He says: "We have found God to be real and his hand to be true and strong in a way we would never have experienced strapped into our own safety harnesses. The journey for me has been incredible but by far the most joyful, exhilarating, and life-altering part has been the authentic experience of God's presence and power. I have experienced God and that experience has come in my weakness. God has called us into a battle with violence and aggressive evil that, every day, my colleagues and I know we cannot win without the specific intervention of God. We are forced by our own weakness to beg him for it, and at times we work without a net, apart from his saving hand. And we have found him to be real and his hand to be true and strong. In concrete terms, what does that desperation look like? For me it means being confronted with a videotape of hundreds of young girls in Cambodia being put on open sale to be raped and abused by sex tourists and foreign pedophiles. It means going into a brothel in Cambodia as part of an undercover



investigation and being presented with a dozen girls between the ages of 5 and 10 who were being forced to provide sex to strangers. It means being told by everyone who should know that there's nothing that can be done about it. It means facing death threats from my investigative colleagues, high-level police corruption, desperately inadequate aftercare capacities for victims, and a hopelessly corrupt court system. It means going to God in honest argument and saying: 'Father, we cannot solve this' and hearing him say: 'Do what you know best to do, and watch me with the rest.' In the end it means taking that risky bargain and seeing God do more than I could have hoped or imagined -- setting girls free, providing high-quality aftercare, bringing the perpetrators to justice, shutting down the whole nasty operation, training the Cambodian authorities to do this work themselves, and seeing the U.S. government willing to pay for it." That is what IJM is all about.

Now they acknowledge that our fair garden in the United States is really the exception to the rule. It's the exception to the rule of poverty, exploitation, and injustice that the rest of the world lives with naturally. And we all have an obligation to do something about it. And if we were brutally honest, we probably would all have to admit that we really don't want to know how bad it is out there. And one reason that we don't really want to know

is because we know that a sovereign God is in charge of this world. And so we fear that understanding the full breadth and depth of the horrors that are part of it would challenge our notion of the goodness of God. I once had a very good friend who was a strong evangelical who volunteered to work in a burn ward, a children's burn ward in a hospital. It shattered her fair garden. I mean there was way too much pain, way too much horror, way too much seeing the victims of abuse who were burned terribly and it took years for her to recover, for her to understand the notion that God was good and that evil still exists and sometimes appears to triumph.

Gary Haugen points out that when it comes to the world, it is our notions that are off and not God's, and he points to the scriptures for proof. Listen to what God says in his word. This is *Job 24*: *The wicked displace boundary markers. They steal a flock and provide pasture for it. They drive away the donkeys owned by the fatherless and take the widow's ox as collateral. They push the needy off the road; the poor of the land are forced into hiding.* *Psalm 37*: *The wicked have drawn the sword and strung the bow to bring down the afflicted and needy and to slaughter those whose way is upright.* *Isaiah 3:14*: *The LORD brings this charge against the elders and leaders he His people: "You have devastated the vineyard. The plunder from the poor is in your houses. Why do you*

*crush My people and grind the faces of the poor?" This is the declaration of the Lord GOD of Hosts. Lamentations 5: Women are raped in Zion, girls in the cities of Judah. Princes are hung up by their hands; elders are shown no respect. Young men labor at millstones; boys stumble under loads of wood. Joel 3: They cast lots for my people, they bartered a boy for a prostitute and sold a girl for wine to drink. And Amos 1:13: The LORD says: I will not relent from punishing the Ammonites for three crimes, even four, because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to enlarge their territory. This is the world that God sees. Haugen says: "The last people who should get caught off guard by injustice in the world should be Bible-believing Christians. For even as we celebrate the coming of Christ into the world, in scripture, we are powerfully reminded of the kind of world that he has come into." He suggests that "our fair garden" experiences shape our understanding of scripture rather than vice versa. We're told in *Ephesians 6: Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.**

You know we read that scripture and we understand it as describing the armor that we are supposed to use in the battles that we face

in our world. It may be gossip or slander or a difficult job or a bad relationship, an unfaithful spouse. And make no mistake about it, these things are real and these things are deadly, but for many, many others in the world, this war is also waged and sometimes lost against real flesh and blood monsters. For instance, over one million new children are kidnapped, sold, or forced into prostitution every year. These kids wrestle with real monsters. Others experience brutal child labor practices or terrorism or genocide or politically motivated starvation. Their "fair garden" is not fair at all. It groans in bondage to decay. And we in America live in a fair garden that seems to be the grand exception to the rule, the biggest exception of that rule in the history of mankind. But we know from scripture, we know that God hates injustice. God says in *Psalm 5: You hate all workers of iniquity.*

You know, I suspect that many of us are sitting here right now and thinking, "Okay, with all due respect, Father, I understand that you hate iniquity but why don't you stop it?" You know, we go back to that ancient dilemma that says if God is all-powerful, well then he can't be all loving because there's just way too much pointless evil in the world. Or if God is all loving then, well, he can't possibly be all-powerful because again, there's just too much pointless evil in the world. You can have a God of love or you can

have a God of power but you can't have both because there's just too much pointless evil. Well Alvin Plantinga is a Christian philosopher and he points out the fallacy in this argument. See the argument states that if evil appears to be pointless to me, well then it can only be so because it is in fact pointless. But that ain't necessarily so. And Plantinga uses the example of no-see-ums, you know, those little biting insects, you often find them down south, they really bite and they itch and they're so tiny you literally cannot see them, hence the name no-see-ums. Well, Plantinga said, "If you were out camping in the woods and someone asked you, 'Would you look in your tent and see if there's a St. Bernard in there,' and you looked in the tent and there was no St. Bernard, you could say 'nope, no St. Bernard.' He said however, if somebody asked you to see if there were no-see-ums in your tent, you wouldn't be able to give him an answer because you just can't see 'em because by their nature, no-see-ums are very difficult to see. Likewise if you see no reason for pointless evil, that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. It simply proves that you can't see it. I mean we think that all good reasons for the existence of evil should be understandable and accessible to our mind and if they're not, we conclude there must not be any reason. And that none is ever going to be found and that everything is indeed pointless evil.

But who says so? I mean, what if God has reasons for allowing this evil that we simply cannot fathom? You know, the most monstrous event in the history of mankind was God himself being stripped, beaten, flogged, and crucified. And even today only God's people understand that that monstrous evil was also the greatest good that was ever done in the history of mankind. The rest of the world still sees that as pointless evil. It's a "no-see-um" to the rest of the world. By faith we understand that what others intended for evil God intended for good, and because Jesus offered up his own sinless life as a substitute for our lives of sin, we now by faith can claim his righteousness as our own. You know, the cross is the greatest evil the world has ever known but it was used by God to provide the greatest good the world has ever seen. And the vast majority of the world still sees it as pointless evil. I mean we know for a fact that God knows what evils this world is filled with and that he is still sovereignly guiding it. And from the standpoint of justice, God knows exactly what that evil entailed when it came to the cross. I mean think about it, his Son was falsely accused, he was tried in a kangaroo court, he was tortured by an occupying government and then he was executed even though the executioner himself said he was innocent. I think we can say that our God knows a little bit about injustice. He hates it. And he wants us to hate it as well. *Isaiah 58:6 says: "Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo*

*the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?"*

Well, so how do we do that? How do we break every yoke? Well the very first part of doing that is to identify injustice and acknowledge it as something that God hates. And IJM has been instrumental in doing just that. They've been instrumental in identifying injustice, and after being on the front lines for many, many years, they have come up with an assessment of what the single core issue is that is keeping people, the vast majority of those who are oppressed and the poor, that is keeping them exactly where they are. And it's not what most people including the experts ever thought that it was. It is really shocking, the conclusion that they've come to after 20 years. According to IJM, the greatest need the impoverished world needs in terms of justice is not better medical care, it's not better economic investment, it's not even better disease prevention. It's something far more basic and far more easy to overlook. Do you know what it is? It's law enforcement. For the vast majority of third world countries, not only does law enforcement not work for them, in fact it works actively against them. Listen to how he puts this. This is Gary Haugen. He says, "I'm pretty sure you are not among the very poorest in our world -- the billions of people who are trying to live off a few dollars a day. As a result, I also know that you

are probably not chronically hungry, you are not likely to die of a perfectly treatable disease, you have reasonable access to fresh water, you are literate, and you have reasonable shelter over your head. But there's something else I know about you. I bet you pass your days in reasonable safety from violence. You are probably not regularly being threatened with being enslaved, imprisoned, beaten, raped, or robbed. But if you were among the world's poorest billions, you would be. That is what the world does not understand about the global poor. He goes on to say: What happens if you're living in a community that is too poor or unwilling to pay for effective public law enforcement services? And what if you don't have enough money to pay for private security services? Then you are left vulnerable to forces of violence, and it is only a matter of time before you are victimized. Like germs in the air, harsh weather, and invisible contaminants, violence is endemic to the human social condition, and if you do not have the resources, public or private, to secure protection against forces of violence, you are not safe, and your well-being is not secure. In fact, your ill-being is quite assured. But most of us in affluent societies have grown so accustomed to the peace and security that is purchased through massive and expensive law enforcement systems that are largely out of sight and out of mind that we have forgotten about the germ of violence that is always in the air. We are no longer mindful of the forces of violence ever pressing at



the borders of human nature, and so we do not enter into poor communities urgently asking: How are these people going to be protected from violence? We haven't been trained to ask the question, and so we are unlikely to probe beneath the surface. If we want to understand the violent reality in which the poor actually live, we will have to look very hard because, of all the conditions that afflict the poor, violence is simply the hardest to see."

We've all been watching the nightly news. We've been seeing the riots in Charlotte, North Carolina, and we understand that they stem from the understanding that if you are a black man or woman in the United States, you get treated differently by the justice system than a white man. For the vast majority of the world's poor, unequal treatment is the exact norm. I mean that's the way it is. And Gary Haugen's latest book *The Locust Effect* describes exactly what happens when you have a lack of law enforcement and he does it by going back to an historic event that took place in the midwest in 1875. It was back in the days of homesteaders where folks literally had to claw holes in the ground to live in because there wasn't enough lumber to build a house, so they had to get protection from the elements by digging underground. If they could survive for five years, well then the government would give them ownership of the land and they could then use that owned land as

collateral to buy seeds and lumber and actually build a homestead. The year was 1875 and it was a good year in Missouri and things were looking up for many of the homesteaders who had survived and eked out this existence for four and a half long years. And that year the weather had been excellent and the gardens were abundant and it looked like there was going to be a very strong harvest when in a matter of hours it was all swept away. This is what Haugen says in his book. He says: As farm families crouched helplessly behind their shelters, the greatest plague of locusts in human history laid waste to all they had toiled so hard to build. Every spear of wheat, oats, flax, and corn were eaten close to the ground. Potatoes and all vegetables received the same treatment, and on the line of their march, ruin stared the farmer in the face as starvation knocked loudly at his door. They estimated that the horde of locusts weighed some 27 million tons. It swarmed over 200,000 square miles of the American midwest. An area greater than the entire state of California was affected and devastated. They said the locusts ate fence posts, said they ate the paint and the siding off houses, they ate wool off the backs of live sheep and the clothes left outside on the line. They said when families desperately took blankets put them over their garden plots, the locusts devoured the blankets and then gorged themselves on the plants. Haugen said this: All the hard work, sacrifice and effort of these impoverished families didn't matter. All the government

grants of free land didn't matter. The assistance of neighbors and well-wishers from the other side of the country didn't matter. Indeed, to those who saw "the labor and loving of years gone within ten days" through the onslaught of the devouring locusts, talk of assistance from outsiders "seemed but a mocking." Haugen goes on to use this as an analogy for what it's like for the rest of the world. And he says that all of the efforts to give folks tools and seeds and trainings "seems like a mocking" when the locusts can just come in and take it all away. And that violence and lawlessness are precisely the locusts that steal any prospect of hope from the world's poor. And this is how he puts it. He says: To provide Laura and Yuri with the promise of schools without addressing the forces of sexual violence that make it too dangerous to walk to or attend school seems like a mocking. To give Caleb job training or Bruno a micro-loan for his belt business without protecting them from being arbitrarily thrown into prison where Caleb loses his job and Bruno loses his business seems like a mocking. To provide Laura and Mariamma with AIDS education and training on making safe sexual choices without addressing the violence in the slums and brick factories where women don't get to make choices seems like a mocking. To establish a rural medical clinic in the area where Gopinath is held as a slave without addressing the violent forces that refuse to allow him to leave the quarry and take his dying kid to a doctor seems like a mocking.

He says: Indeed for the rural poor of the American midwest in the 1870s, it just didn't matter what they did for themselves or what others contributed in terms of land, or seeds, or plows, or training, or education, or irrigation, or livestock, or capital. If the locusts were coming to swarm and lay waste to it all, then the impoverished and vulnerable farmers on those Plains were not going to thrive -- ever. All the other efforts were important, life-giving, and vital, but the usefulness of those efforts just could not withstand the devastating impact of the devouring locusts -- and those other efforts could not stop the locusts. Likewise, it seems that we are approaching a pivotal moment in history where agreement is beginning to emerge that if we do not decisively address the plague of everyday violence that swarms over the common poor in the developing world, the poor will not be able to thrive and achieve their dreams -- ever. Without the world noticing, the locusts of common, criminal violence are right now ravaging the lives and dreams of billions of our poorest neighbors. We have come to call the unique pestilence of violence and the punishing impact it has on efforts to lift the global poor out of poverty the locust effect. This plague of predatory violence is different from other problems facing the poor; and so, the remedy to the locust effect must also be different.

Here's the big question: What is the remedy? Well, first of all, we can step out of our fair gardens and view evil full in the face. That's the very first step towards stopping it. You know, Gary Haugen cited three examples in his first book, three examples of appalling injustice where people stood up to identify and acknowledge it for what it was. The first was a country that allowed child prostitution. Girls were kidnapped and kept by fist, by boot, and by bulldog. He said authorities were bribed, runaways were returned, one girl rebelled and was murdered. She was soaked in oil and burned alive. And even though the authorities knew who did it, they were paid off so no charges were brought. Said the second country allowed the appalling use of child labor. He said children 7 to 15 were forced to work in a mill up to 82 hours a week and the work was loud and dirty and dangerous and children were frequently maimed or killed. He said one 7-year-old child had three fingers torn off by a machine and the boss said she was careless. Investigators said doesn't a 7-year-old have the right to be careless? The third country involves summary execution by vigilante squads and disappearance by death squads. People were either lynched or burned alive at the stake. And it was all done for the purpose of terrorizing the people group into keeping their place.

Now the bad news, the terribly bad news is that evil even existed.

The good news is that the country that it once existed in was this one, the United States, and it is no more. You see in the 1880s, hundreds of girls were forced into prostitution in the logging mills and mining communities of Wisconsin and Minnesota. And at great risk to herself, Kate Bushnell put a stop to it. She infiltrated the brothels, rescued the girls, and took the leaders to court despite great threats of violence. In 1907, Edgar Murphy formed the National Child Labor Committee. He wrote nine different pamphlets and printed 280,000 copies. He succeeded in passing the very first restrictions on child labor that eventually ended the practice. And in 1930 Jesse Daniel Ames founded the ASWPL, the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention Lynching. She worked tirelessly organizing women against the practice. And by 1941, 1355 police officers had signed a pledge against it. And by 1950 it had disappeared. Justice had triumphed over injustice and it happened right here in the United States. And in each case it was law enforcement that changed. And the three people who brought about that change had a few things in common. Number one, they were all Americans; number two, they all worshiped Jesus Christ; number three, they all prayed; and number four, they all knew their bibles. They all knew what our text this morning says about the character of God. This is *Ezekiel 22*. It says: *The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger. So I*

*sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.*

I don't know if you're like me but I've seen this text many, many times as a call for people to pray and I never realized that the context of this text is much broader and bigger than that. The primary call of this text is God's heart for justice and he's looking for someone to do something about it. *So I sought for a man among them who would stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land; but I found no one.* These men and women that I just spoke about wouldn't let that happen. And they became, at great personal risk, someone who would stand in the gap of injustice and they changed this country. And they did so because they refused to accept that their ignorance was invincible. They stepped out of their fair gardens and they did something about it. And that's really the point and the purpose of freedom Sunday. It's to expose us all to a world that we are largely ignorant of. But now that we know, we have no excuse. And secondly, it's to point us to a response to the challenge of worldwide justice for the sake of the gospel.

One thing that IJM has discovered over these last two decades is that the solutions to worldwide injustice are incredibly complex

and they're incredibly difficult and they're tied to the specifics of what each country and each area is suffering from. There is no easy answer to this at all. I mean basically what God has done is given Gary Haugen the ability over the last 20 years to open this up and see how incredibly difficult an issue it is to solve. And what Haugen is suggesting is that the issues are so complex that they're only going to arrive at a solution to them by going to the individual countries, sitting down with individual victims, hearing their stories, and then devising ways of restoring unique and individualized systems of law enforcement that actually work for instead of against the poor. And the good news for us is that we as a country were just as bad as some of the worst of those countries, countries where injustice is still considered the norm, and so there's always hope. And the response of us to injustice is threefold. And I've mentioned it before, either we go or we send, and either way we pray. So if God is calling you to go, and by that I mean if God is calling you to pursue this venue, pursue injustice, then offer up the very best to your effort including seeing if you can volunteer, seeing what IJM is about. So offer yourself, number one. If he's not calling you specifically, then you send. And sending means giving time, effort and yes, money, to organizations like IJM. And finally we do what every one of us I know can do, and that is we pray. So let's pray.



*Father, I just thank you for IJM, I thank you for Gary Haugen. I thank you for what you have done through this one man and who has -- a man who has spent so much of the last 20 years delving into what is obviously some of the most hideous stuff in the world. I thank you that he has not flinched. I thank you that you have given him the courage and the grace and the strength and the power to continue to look at what is so awful and ugly and consider that he has not grown weary of well doing and that they are growing even stronger, and so I'm thankful for that. And Lord, we are at this point today exercising something that removes from us the idea that our ignorance is invincible. It's not. We have the responsibility of knowing that the world out there is not like our fair garden. The world out there is hideous, and the vast majority of the world's poor are victims of it. So I pray that you would give us first of all a heart for this injustice, a heart for the poor, a heart for what we need to do to see that we in some way, somehow can have a difference and make a difference. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*