Truth brings freedom
By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

My favorite freedom story is about the prophet Jeremiah and Ebedmelech (Jeremiah 38). Jeremiah had the unenviable task of speaking God's word during a rebellious time. Jeremiah was consistently faithful in listening to God and repeating His displeasure with the sinfulness of the children of Israel. He predicted that the king of Babylon would defeat king Zedekiah.

The rulers were enraged. They threatened him, put him in prison, anything to convince Jeremiah to prophesy victory. But Jeremiah remained faithful to the word of God. He valued truth above everything, including his own life.

As Jeremiah persisted in telling the truth, unpopular as it was, the princes decided to kill him. They put him in a dungeon. The description is graphic, "and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire."

What a reward for telling the truth! Does our life seem like Jeremiah's? When we uncover corruption or dishonesty or wrong-doing, and expose it to the authorities, are we punished by those around us? It sure seems that way sometimes.

Isn't it easier to look the other way and keep quiet? But God is calling us, as He called Jeremiah, to tell the truth especially when the truth is unpopular. That's when the truth needs to be told. If we wait until truth is popular, then our words are less necessary.

Jesus tells us, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) That is what was really happening with Jeremiah. By not compromising, he was inspiring those around him to be bolder. Someone else responded to God's call to boldly tell the truth, and this won their own and Jeremiah's freedom.

Ebedmelech was an Ethiopian serving king Zedekiah. When he heard what had happened, he immediately went to the king and spoke out boldly. "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to

Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is." Ebedmelech spoke the truth so fearlessly that he convinced the king to allow him to rescue Jeremiah. So Jeremiah was saved by an honest, fearless Ethiopian, Ebedmelech.

When the king of Babylon took the city, as Jeremiah predicted, Ebedmelech was saved alive according to the word of God for having rescued Jeremiah. So in the long run, telling the truth freed Jeremiah, saved Ebemelech, and preserved all those who listened to the truth.

True freedom is based on honesty, obedience and boldness in the truth. We will never win our own and others' permanent freedom by keeping silent over immorality and wrong-doing. Silence is only a trap. We may get dropped into our own private pit for telling the truth. But keep praying to God. God will send an Ebedmelech to rescue you. And your courage in standing for truth will inspire others. The Truth will make us all free.

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