

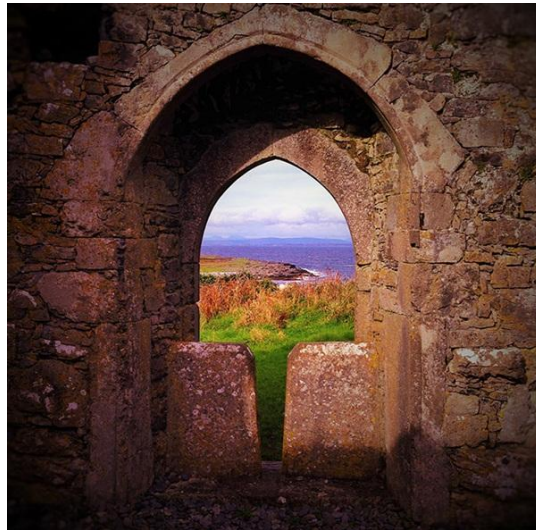


SIEBENQUELL

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# »Being free is nothing, becoming free is everything!«

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In the Acts of the Apostles there is a short but important story of but a few verses.

**But the high priest, having risen up, and all those with him (being the sect of the Sadducees) were filled with jealousy, and they laid hands on the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord, having opened the doors of the jail, having brought them out, also said, »Go, and having stood in the temple, speak to the people all the words of this life.« (Apg 5, 17-20)**

Here we have a story of liberation. Prison gates are opened by an angel, people are led out of prison by God's messengers.

Prisons always play two roles. On the one hand, they lock people up to punish them by depriving them of their freedom. On the other hand, they protect the people on the outside from those on the inside and what they do to disturb our order and peace.

Well, when a person is released from prison, it is usually the case that the freed person is no longer a disruptive factor. But the angel makes it clear that God opens the gates for his people, leads them out and releases them into life to do exactly the opposite. They should stand out, cause a stir and disrupt. Normally, released prisoners try to disappear inconspicuously and go into hiding. Here,

however, God's messenger wants them to go to the temple, the most public place in Jerusalem. And the mission is clear: »Speak to the people all the words of this life!«

This is not about a freedom so that we can hide, but about the freedom to stand up for ourselves. A great thinker once said: »Being free is nothing, becoming free is everything!« (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel)

Here, prison gates are opened so that we can enter into life. We should stand by what is within us, what has shaped and moulded us, what allows us to live.

We know this biblical story and its lessons for life. We have been freed from what once held us captive. God's messengers have opened gates to life for us that we could not open on our own. They have shown us the paths to freedom and accompanied us to the threshold of freedom.

But as a liberated person, I must go to the temple. I must go to the centre of life and proclaim »all the words of this life«.

All the words of this life means that I must proclaim who opened the prison gates for me, who led me through bondage, who accompanied me into life. Proclaiming all the words of this life means that I also proclaim what I was freed for. My life is not freed so that I can hide away, but so that I can appear in the temple and become a messenger of God myself.

»Being free is nothing, becoming free is everything!«

**P. Erik Riechers SAC**

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