



William Wilberforce

"So enormous, so dreadful, so irremediable did the [slave] trade's wickedness appear that my own mind was completely made up for abolition. Let the consequences be what they would: I from this time determined that I would never rest until I had effected its abolition."

William Wilberforce (1759-1833) would grow up to become one of the most famous and successful members ever of the British Parliament. Yet, during school, no one would have picked him out for greatness. He was not a particularly strong student, and he spent most of his time at college socializing rather than working. Later, his family connections helped to secure a place in the House of Commons, but he did little with his role as a representative of the people. However, around 1785, he rediscovered his Christian faith and rededicated his life to serving others. He soon took up the antislavery cause after meeting several abolitionists who were already active in the effort to eliminate this horrid institution. Unfortunately, his efforts to pass laws against the slave trade and slavery were constantly blocked by special interests. Between 1789 and 1805, he introduced bills banning the slave trade almost every year, only to see them go down in defeat. These special interests also attacked him the media in the most cruel ways and attempted to destroy his reputation. Yet, he persevered. In 1807, Wilberforce and the thousands of other men and women who worked in this cause rejoiced as a law banning the slave trade in the British Empire was passed. He did not stop there, continuing to fight against slavery until his dying day. Before he passed away in July of 1833, he received word that the bill to abolish slavery entirely in British lands would be passed.

Inspired by his faith, Wilberforce was a leading voice in a crusade that liberated countless souls from the bondage of slavery, and we honor his work and the efforts of so many others in the cause of freedom for others.