



We Can Do Anything We Want!

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“Don’t we have to worry about the police?” The company van motors along the highway. It’s early morning and the sun is only just peeking from behind the clouds, rousing itself for a new day.

“Police?” Koh responds. “Don’t worry, nephew. Besides, how will they know?”

Daniel watches the grey clouds slowly give way to the warm rays. Thinks it over.

“And even if they did know,” continues Koh, “what do they care? They understand that these foreign workers cause trouble. It’s better for everyone to keep them inside the hostel whenever they aren’t working.”

“It just seems strange to lock the doors from the outside,” says Daniel. “What if there’s a fire?”

“When was the last time a high rise burnt down in Klang?”

Daniel shrugs his shoulders and looks out the window, remembering what his father said to him before he left the house and got in the van: *Just do what your Uncle Koh says and don’t cause any more trouble! You’re lucky there’s someone left who’ll give you a job.*

“What we really have to worry about is our workers leaving the hostel for nights of revelry and not coming back. You have to watch these workers like a hawk. And don’t be afraid to knock them back when they step out of line.”

Daniel helps Koh light the cigarette. Koh exhales a quick puff of smoke that clouds the air. “The best way to get them to behave is to deduct wages.”

“You can do that?” Daniel asks.

“We can do anything we want!” says Koh.

Uncle Koh hands Daniel a cigarette and grabs his shoulder, shaking the boy vigorously. “Now don’t get ahead of yourself!” he laughs. “I can see the wheels in your head turning. Or is it that roulette wheel you like to spin so much?”

“I was just curious,” Daniel says, tucking the unlit cigarette behind his ear, embarrassed that his father told Koh about his gambling troubles.

“Just make sure you get all their documents before we leave the terminal,” says Koh.

As they continue their way to the airport to pick up the new arrivals from Hanoi, Daniel leans back in the passenger seat and closes his eyes, letting the sun, now fully unfurled, bathe his face in warmth as it lights the surrounding landscape. He can’t help imagining that, tucked away between pages of their passports, and other belongings, the workers have valuable, hidden currency.

Attitudes and Beliefs in Our Society

Did you know over **80%** of Malaysians agree with the statement that unauthorized migrants cannot expect to have *any* rights at work.⁶

The majority in our society believe undocumented migrant workers have no employment rights. If they are working they have no right to collect a salary, a fair wage, overtime pay, a safe workplace, a day off. In other words, if a worker is undocumented (for any reason), we can exploit their labor or treat them fairly. They can not expect any employment rights; we get to decide, we get to make our own laws.

The Bible tells us that God is just. He is fair and impartial, able to judge between right and wrong. The Bible says our actions toward the poor and the alien, whether visible in the community or invisible behind our gates, reflect our deepest beliefs about human equality. They reflect our hearts’ opinion about God. Our choices honor God, our choices show contempt for our Maker, our choices matter to God.

Prayer

Father God, we pray for your comfort and intervention in the lives of men, women and children who right now are confined, exploited, and abused in Malaysia, who are being held against their will and who are being entrapped by their employers. We pray for their rescue. We also pray you would bring peace and comfort those who have already been rescued but still feel traumatized by detention and the loss of freedom. We ask that you would stir the hearts of our government to enact and implement policies that would provide care and support for victims of human trafficking in Malaysia. We ask you to raise up groups of people, just like us, who would assist in the care and restoration of survivors of human trafficking.