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*Fourth Sunday of Easter, May 8, 2022wiestpastor@gmail.comwiestpastor@gmail.com*

Greeting

Gathering Words:

Come, let us rejoice in the freedom that is ours. The very heavens proclaim the glory of Jesus Christ in whom freedom is found. The foundation of freedom is the righteousness and justice of God. This freedom knows no bounds. Come and share in this Spirit as we worship.

**Worship Music Chain Breaker**

OPENING PRAYER

Holy One, you come to us as a flash of lightning, an uncontrollable source of energy and power. Even while we try to keep you within the boxes of our liturgy, hymns, and theology, your spirit continues breaking forth in new and unexpected ways, reminding us that you are the One in whom the whole earth rejoices. In this time of worship and prayer, loosen our chains, open our hearts that we may hear and respond to your spirit’s call. **AMEN.**

\*OPENING HYMN Give to the Winds Thy Fears #129

THE FIRST LESSON Luke 6: 18-19, 22-23 (NLT)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD’S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen**

CHOIR ANTHEM Great is Thy Faithfulness

SHARING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY INVITATION:

We are set free to embrace the abundance of life we are given. The gifts we bring today reflect our desire and commitment to live in the unity of compassion and justice revealed in Christ.

OFFERTORY

\*DOXOLOGY #95

\*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Holy One, the world knows of your love through the kindness and care we share with one another. The world knows of your love by our readiness to share in your liberating love for all peoples. May the offerings we bring this day be a transforming source of good news, hope, and promise in which the whole world may rejoice. Amen.

GOSPEL LESSON Acts 16: 16-34 (ESV)

HYMN OF PREPARATION He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought (1-2) #128

SERMON Chain Breaker Pastor Lyle

\*CLOSING HYMN Now Thank We All Our God #102

BENEDICTION

Go forth with hearts and ears attentive to the voices of all who long for freedom. Go forth in the unity we have been given in the love Christ reveals for us and all Creation. Go forth knowing God’s freedom is at work in you, opening the prison doors to your liberation. In your words and through our actions sing the song of salvation’s freedom. Let God’s people say, **“AMEN!”**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Our Prayer List:**

Brandy Ansel – recovery at home Clark Harding - surgery

Boose Foundry - recovery Karl Haver – lung cancer

Family of Clara Boutelle Lamar Horst – York Hospital recovering

Janie Buchter – anxiety Luke Mengel - stent procedure

Everleigh Sage Corwin – home Jim Olson – triple bypass

Connie DeHaven -Maple Farms Gary Rohrbach – knee replacement

Chris Diehl – cancer Joe Sipes – car accident

John Dirks – stent leaking Peace in Ukraine

Cornette Evans – cancer Megan Weir – deployed

Rosemary Feister- test results Bonnie Wyniawkyj -family concerns

Family of Clyde HartranftJonah Zink - stroke

**SUNDAY MORNING OFFERING**

**OFFERING AMT NEEDED EACH WEEK       $1,365**

**OFFERING May 1st  $1,023**

**AMT OF OFFERING NEEDED TO DATE     $24,570**

**AMT RECEIVED TO DATE            $28,932**

**BUDGET YTD +$4,362 Attendance – 38 Folks**

**What’s happening at Wiest:**

Adult Sunday School – 1015 Sundays

Choir Practice – Mondays 1PM

Bible Study – 1000-1200 Tuesdays with fellowship

Girl Scouts – 1st Thursday of each month

Blessings of Hope – May 28th 1030-1100

Audio of the Sunday message is posted on our church website ([www.wiestchurch.org](http://www.wiestchurch.org)). Video on Wiest Church Facebook page

Lectionary Readings for next week: Psalm 148; Acts 11:1-18; Revelation 21:1-6

John 13:31-35.

Chain Breaker

Paul and Silas are in Philippi. It is years after Paul’s encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Much formation has taken place. He is now a witness to the Gentiles. They are on their way to a place of prayer when they meet a demon possessed slave girl. She is very good at predicting the future. She brought home a lucrative profit for her owners. She correctly identified Paul and Silas as slaves of God. Following them around, she cried out, “These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.” One of the persistent features of the New Testament is the ability of various spirits and demons to recognize Jesus, even when others (especially the disciples) are clueless.

Paul was troubled by her and called the demon out of her in the name of Jesus. Then things get ugly. The angry and suddenly poorer owners of the girl dragged Paul and Silas into the marketplace to face Roman officials The owners accuse Paul and Silas of three serious charges. First came the anti-Semitic attack. “These men are Jews….” And not only that, but they are also disturbing the peace, “throwing our city into an uproar….” Worse than that, they are doing that by preaching an illicit religion, “advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.” Paul and Silas are in deep trouble now. They need to be saved. Instead, they are stripped, beaten, and thrown into the deepest cell of the local prison, in solitary confinement with their legs in stocks. Rather than being afraid in their darkest hour, they sang hymns and prayed. This was heard by other prisoners. At about midnight, an earthquake loosened their bonds and those of the other prisoners.

The jailer was awakened, and seeing the prison doors opened, prepared to commit suicide. Now it was the jailer who needed salvation. Paul told him that all the prisoners were still there.

The jailer asked what he needed to do to be saved. Paul said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Which is what happened. Then the jailer cleaned their wounds. “He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.” God’s generosity was matched by human generosity.

What are we to learn from this passage? I ask that you think about that. Here are my thoughts.

1. We are all in need of salvation; men and women, Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, powerful and powerless.
2. Each of us experiences salvation in a different way; some instantly, some over time. Some may not experience it, and yet believe.
3. God shakes foundations, disrupts the usual, and often goes against the rules.

This story invites us to consider our own freedom and power. Many who are rich and powerful are neither happy nor free. The chains of many are self-imposed. Many who are recovering from addiction or setbacks realize that there is a higher power in control. Real personal freedom is something else. It comes from somewhere else.

In this season of Easter, when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, and the power of God to bring new life to us all, what are the chains that hold you? What are the doors that are closed to you? It may be time to cast them off and open them up. Christ has set you free. Believe it; live it, share it with words and by how you live.

God of freedom,

Paul and Silas worshiped you, even when they were flogged and imprisoned. Transform our hearts so that we may also rejoice in you at all times and in all situations. Fill our hearts with your Spirit, our mouths with song, and our lives with your love in all places and situations. Amen.

Sermon Quiz

1. The slave girl identified Paul and Silas, saying, “These men are \_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
2. Paul called the \_\_\_\_\_ out of the slave girl in the name of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_\_ of the slave girl suffered \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ loss and were angry.
4. Paul and Silas were accused of anti-Semitism, disturbing the \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ an illegal religion.
5. They were stripped, beaten and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, their legs in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. They sang \_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_ while in prison.
7. When an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ freed the prisoners, they remained in their \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_\_ asked what he needed to do to be \_\_\_\_\_.
9. We are all need \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, no matter who we are, or our \_\_\_\_\_\_.
10. Christ has set you \_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it; live it; \_\_\_\_\_ it with words and by how you live.

Last Week’s Sermon Quiz

1. Paul got authorization from the high priest in Jerusalem to purge the synagogues of Damascus of the followers of the “Way.”
2. Blinded by a light from heaven, he heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”
3. He was taken by the hand to Damascus where he neither ate or drank for three days.
4. Saul would have a dream that Ananias would restore his vision.
5. Jesus said that Saul was his chosen instrument to spread the gospel to the Gentiles and the kings and children of Israel.
6. Ananias trusted Jesus and obeyed his instructions.
7. Jesus said that Saul would be filled with the Holy Spirit.
8. Saul proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying that “He is the Son of God.”
9. Maybe Paul prayed “Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.”
10. The Holy Spirit is active today, just as it was in Paul’s time.