

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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## SERMON TITLE

Chain Breaker

## SERIES

## DATE

1/22/2023

## KEY SCRIPTURE

Various Scriptures

## SYNOPSIS

God wants to set people free from all kinds of bondage.

## HIGHLIGHTS



## ☞ Chain Breaker

### ☞ Psalms 107:10-16

10 Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, 11 for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High. 12 So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. 13 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. 14 He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains. 15 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, 16 for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.

☞ **Disobedience to God leads to calamity and captivity.** God has made his general will for us plain in the Scriptures, but when we choose to go against his will, it causes trouble. It feels like freedom at the time, but ultimately leads to bondage. For instance, God says to avoid excessive drinking, but when ignored, it can easily lead to an addiction, which is actually a form of bondage. This goes as well for many other things such as drug abuse, pornography and even something as simple as a lie. One lie leads to another and another, and then you are bound to remember and stick to those lies. You're stuck.

When you choose to live like this, life becomes extra difficult and you will stumble and fumble around. But, if you **cry out to the Lord, he will bring you out of darkness and break your chains.** Whatever may have you bound and in chains can be broken by the power of God. You've heard of 12-step programs which are very helpful, but sometimes God will do a 1-step program of total deliverance.

Don't forget his unfailing love. He loves you more than you can imagine. Don't forget his wonderful deeds. Nothing is impossible with God. What has you cornered and confined? What have you been struggling to be free from? God is more than able to deliver you.

*He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee;  
Though by sin oppressed, go to Him for rest;  
"Our God is able to deliver thee."*

### ☞ Acts 12:1-11

1 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. 4 After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. 6 The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. 8 Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow



me," the angel told him. 9 Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10 They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. 11 Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

☞ **Sometimes the chains we feel are from the persecution of the enemy.** There really is a spiritual enemy and he loves to keep us tied up and ineffective. You can actually be doing everything right and still experience limitations which feel like chains. Since there really is an enemy, it can be nothing more than persecution intended to shut you up and shut you out.

☞ However, **it could also be part of God's greater plan.** In the Old Testament, Joseph was sold into slavery and ended up in prison, but it was all part of God's plan to raise him up as a leader in Egypt and to save all Israel during a famine which was coming. In the New Testament, Paul said that his chains actually served to advance the gospel. His guards heard the gospel and other believers became bolder in sharing their faith.

Here in Acts, the church was overjoyed when **Peter was supernaturally delivered from his chains. It was a direct result of their prayers. Don't underestimate the power of prayer.** The church in this case was earnestly praying for Peter and as a result, God sent an angel to deliver him. Can you imagine the encouragement that brought to those who were praying? I mean, at first, they didn't really believe it. You can see that in verses 14 and 15. But after that, I don't imagine they had any reservations about making bold requests of the Lord.

Hebrews 4:16 NKJV

<sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Your prayers can lead to chains being broken for someone else. **You can be part of the chain breaking process.**

☞ **2 Timothy 2:8-9**

8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained.

Paul, the Apostle was simply sharing the gospel as he was called to do, and it led to his imprisonment. He was in chains simply for being a Christian. We are hearing of this same treatment becoming more and more common today. It's been happening for years in Communist and Muslim nations and now it's getting even closer to home. Street preachers in England, pastors in Canada and even some in the US have faced charges for nothing more than



sharing the gospel. Even if we are not quite at that level yet here in the Midwest, there is a growing pressure to limit the freedoms of Christians and to silence the spread of the gospel.

☞ We may be limited, but God's word is unlimited. Paul reminds us that **God's Word is never chained**. That would be like saying that God, himself could be chained. God's word is unchained and always accomplishes its purpose.

Isaiah 55:11

...my word that goes out from my mouth... will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

There's a lot of bondage in our world today. People, even Christians, are struggling with addictions and sinful tendencies. Many are living according to their own desires rather than God's will, and that always leads to bondage. Others are experiencing the persecution and problems brought on by our very real spiritual enemy who wants us bound up and limited. And still others are feeling the pressure of a society that is becoming less and less open to the message of the Gospel.

There is an overwhelming propensity toward bondage in our world today. Even political and governmental tendencies are becoming more and more restrictive. High taxes and government overreaches are keeping businesses from growing and prospering. Inflation is keeping many people in bondage to poverty. News agencies thrive on keeping people in bondage to fear. There are forms of bondage everywhere. But Jesus came to proclaim freedom and set the oppressed free.

☞ **Luke 4:18-19**

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. **He has sent me** to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, **to set the oppressed free**, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Now, we can partner with Jesus in this mission of freedom:

☞ **Isaiah 58:6**

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"

We've already seen the power of prayer to deliver from bondage when the early church prayed earnestly for Peter who was set free. Now, we add to that the power of fasting.

- Jehoshaphat called for a fast when facing a vast army coming against his nation.
- Ezra called for a fast when returning from captivity to rebuild the temple.
- Even the wicked Ninevites called for a fast when Jonah prophesied impending doom.
- Jesus fasted before starting his public ministry.
- And Jesus told his disciples that some demons can only come out by prayer *and* fasting.





Listen to these descriptive terms here in Isaiah 58. It's all about freedom, chain breaking, and ☞ deliverance: **Loose, untie, set free, break**. God wants to put a stop to injustice and let justice flow freely. He wants to untie, break off, and tear apart those things which are causing oppression and a spirit of heaviness. He wants to set people free.

☞ These results are all associated with fasting. **Fasting** = to abstain from all or some kinds of food; **to deny oneself**; in our modern culture, other forms of fasting can be very powerful: denying yourself screen time, various forms of entertainment, and all kinds of indulgences. Trade those in, at least for a time, in order to pray and seek the Lord. See what God will do! He brings freedom.

There is so much bondage in our world today. You may be experiencing a form of bondage. Someone you know is certainly chained up. Here's the good news: **God is the deliverer; he is ☞ for freedom; he is the chain breaker. And, we can partner with him when we fast and pray.**

In context, there's more than just abstaining from food or some other self-gratification. Fasting also means to be more generous and share with others in need. It includes working to help others. It also includes doing away with accusations and malicious talk. This kind of fasting is greatly needed in our modern world, which tends to be so self-focused. Actually, it's that self-focus which contributes to so much bondage. When everything is always someone else's fault, and when everything is all about "me-me-me," that's a form of bondage in itself.

But when we choose to fast the Lord's way, then there will be breakthrough, healing and the glory of the Lord. Then there will be answers to prayer and clear direction from the Lord. Then there will be abundance and plenty, and you will be strengthened. **God is the chain breaker. We can partner with him and be chain breakers too.**

*Chain Breaker – Zach Williams*

*If you've been walking the same old road for miles and miles  
If you've been hearing the same old voice tell the same old lies  
If you're trying to fill the same old holes inside  
There's a better life, there's a better life*

*We've all searched for the light of day in the dead of night  
We've all found ourselves worn out from the same old fight  
We've all run to things we know just ain't right  
When there's a better life, there's a better life*

*If you've got pain, He's a pain taker  
If you feel lost, He's a way maker  
If you need freedom or saving, He's a prison-shaking Savior  
If you got chains, He's a chain breaker*

☞ **Open Altar: music will begin**