

# Freedom BOUND

A close-up photograph of a rusty, dark brown metal shackle and chain. The shackle is a U-shaped metal ring, and the chain is made of several interlocking links. The metal is heavily corroded, with a rough, pitted texture. The shackle and chain are resting on a light-colored, sandy surface. The background is out of focus, showing more of the sand.

*Advent - Epiphany 2015*

Advent Four: The Path of Love

# Freedom Bound

## *Advent – Epiphany 2015*

- Why the theme "Freedom Bound" for this series?
- We live in the paradox where we are both bound and free, on a march to freedom but encumbered by the burden of sin we carry; we are carrying the scars of struggle but living with a new hope.
- Therefore, we will be reflecting on how God's coming (advent) in Jesus, whom we call the Christ, releases us from personal, social, and historical chains that bind us.
- God's freedom takes us down pathways of: **justice, mercy, trust, love, service, and inclusion.**

## **Psalm 25:1,4 NIV**

<sup>1</sup> In you, LORD my God,  
I put my trust.

<sup>4</sup> Show me your ways, LORD,  
teach me your paths.

<sup>5</sup> Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my Savior,  
and my hope is in you all day long.

Mary's Song  
**Luke 1:46-55 NRSV**

# The Kingdom in the Margins

## Matthew 3:1-3 NIV

<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea <sup>2</sup> and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>3</sup> This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.’”

Jesus reveals God's liberating love by scattering the proud, raising up the lowly, and filling the hungry.

# “Jesus scatters the proud”

## **Matthew 22:15-17 NIV—Jesus doesn’t pick sides**

<sup>15</sup> Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. <sup>16</sup> They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. <sup>17</sup> Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?”

## **Matthew 21:31-32 NIV – Jesus to religious leaders**

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. <sup>32</sup> For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.



# “Jesus raises up the lowly”

## **Luke 19:1-6 NIV—Zacchaeus comes off his high horse**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup> A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. <sup>3</sup> He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” <sup>6</sup> So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

## **Luke 19:7-10 NIV**

<sup>7</sup> All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

<sup>8</sup> But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

## **Luke 7:36-38, 47-48 NIV—Love for the lowly in sin**

<sup>36</sup> When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. <sup>37</sup> A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. <sup>38</sup> As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

<sup>47</sup> Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”

<sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

# “Jesus fills the hungry”

**John 4:13-15 NIV – Jesus fills the heart of the Samaritan**

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

## **John 6:32-35 NIV— Jesus is real food from heaven**

<sup>32</sup> Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

<sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

<sup>34</sup> “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.



# GUNGOR

“Us For Them” (2015)  
Album: One Wild Life: Soul

# Walking the Road to Freedom

- Jesus reveals that the path of love scatters the proud, raises up the lowly, and fills the hungry with good things
- The path of love leads us into the messy, disreputable lives of sinners who are lost and in need of a savior
- If we're to walk Jesus' path of love, we must not fall into the "trap" of social, political & cultural extremes; we must seek the third way of Christ (truth, peace & love)
- What keeps you from freely walking Jesus' path of love? Are you being shaped more by the extremes we see today (us vs. them), or by Christ's third way? Where do you need to experience Christ born anew in you?

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Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:  
[www.christiansburgmennonite.org](http://www.christiansburgmennonite.org)