

## services

sundays @ 7:45, 9:00 & 10:30 am

mondays @ 6:30 pm

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## Unlocked

Harry Houdini, the escape artist, always escaped. Except once.

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Harry Houdini, the famed escape artist, issued a challenge wherever he went. He could be locked in any jail cell in the country, he claimed, and set himself free in short order. And he always kept his promise, except one time when something went wrong.

Houdini entered the jail and heard the heavy, metal door clang shut behind him. He set to work immediately, pulling from his belt a concealed piece of metal he always carried with him. But something seemed unusual about this lock. He worked and worked, and an hour passed, and he was bathed in sweat, breathing more deeply by the minute as he tried to unlock the door. After two hours he collapsed in frustration and failure, and flung himself against the door he couldn't unlock - and it swung open! It had never really been locked at all, except in his mind!

How many of us are like that? We think the door to happiness and joy, the door to gaining God's pleasure, to conquering sins that dominate us, the door to true Christian confidence needs to be picked open by what we do or how sincerely and strongly we believe.

How many of us have lived day to day sweating the thought of facing God, locked up in the regret of another day that we didn't do enough, imprisoned by our fear of the future, tortured thinking of every little thing God demands that we aren't able to do? And the more we have tried to get out of it, the more desperate we have become or, perhaps, the more distant from God! And all the while, God had already unlocked us from the demands of the law with the key of Christ's perfect obedience to the law for us, set us free from Satan's tortures and temptations, opened the door to eternal life.

"The Lord sets prisoners free" (Psalm 146:7).

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

"You have been set free from sin" (Romans 6:18).

"You were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13).

PRAYER: Jesus, I am sometimes a prisoner of my faith that is so underdeveloped, my inattentive watchfulness, and my short-term memory recalling too few of your

promises. I confess that I paralyze myself with my own inaccurate perceptions. I know that I need you, my Savior, applying freedom to me not as a deed for me to accomplish but as a gift of your grace – unlocking the door and releasing me from sin and guilt and worry. When I am slow to learn please take time for me. When I am inattentive please call my name once more. When I am frozen in my own fears please embrace me with your reassuring love. When I exhale my last breath on this earth please spring my soul to eternal paradise. For in you I am free. Amen.

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