**Sermon Series *— Experiencing God*
Sermon #19: “Jesus Is the Door”
May 15, 2022**

John 10:7-10
Acts 16:22-35

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| **Slide** | **Sermon** |
| 1 | Title Slide |
| 2 | Introduction – I feel most people are like me when it comes to this passage. We go throughout our lives trying to go in God’s direction and do what God wants us to do. Often times we talk about it like this: God opened this door for me to serve. Or God closed that door to service. I told everyone about my attempt to become a hospital chaplain a few weeks ago. After trying 5 times, I concluded that God firmly closed that door. Also, I studied mathematics in college getting an undergraduate degree in that field. But, I had no desire to teach and no guidance in how I might use that degree. While I liked mathematics, I finally felt God had closed that door in my life. In my work as a dorm director at Louisburg Junior College and part-time math teacher and through some influences from close friends, I felt God opened the door to ministry. So, I decided to go to seminary and become an ordained minister. I saw it as God opening that door. In what ways have you felt that God has opened doors in your life? What are some ways you felt God has closed doors in your life?As a result of the pandemic, we at Center have tried to understand and make some sense out of what has happened in our church. We tried multiple times to restart Kid Zone. But every time, multiple factors prevented Center from doing so. As it now stands, Center is in the process of reforming its reasons for having Kid Zone, especially trying to have it more closely related to Center’s overall ministry. Many feel like God has closed that door for now. Take WOW – Weenies on Wednesday; COVID stopped that in its tracks. We feel God closed that door. And at present there is NO real interest in re-opening that ministry/fund raiser. The pandemic forced Center to virtual worship for months and then making it only possible to have one service which is now a blended worship experience. Did God close the door to two services – one contemporary and one traditional? On the other side, the pandemic could be viewed as opening the door to serious consideration of what Center needs to change to become a more vibrant, exciting church. |
| 3 | So, many Christians talk about God “opening doors” to us as a means of His revealing His will. But what is really going on when we talk about God opening and closing doors? Are we asking God to engineer our circumstances to match what we think we could do best? The problem is we misunderstand what the door is. Jesus said, “He is the door.” Circumstances are irrelevant for no one can shut the door that Jesus opens. The image I have is that Jesus himself opens and closes himself to ministries in our lives.**Revelation 3:7-8***…7These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key to David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. 8I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.*If you have substituted activity for your relationships with Christ, then circumstances can disrupt your activity. When the activity is hindered, you may assume the door has been closed. Yet, Christ is the door in your life. He will guide you into every experience of Him that He wants and there will be nothing that people can do to stop Him. |
| 4 | So, we can’t confuse the idea that Jesus opens doors and closes doors of our activity to the idea that Jesus is the door.With the former, we are the ones in control. We look at circumstances and determine if they are from Christ or not. We determine that if things work out then they were from God. If things don’t work out, then they were not from God. The problem with this logic is that we remain in control, and we pick and choose what we believe is best for us and therefore what God desires for us.With the latter concept, Jesus is the door; it is necessary we stay close to Jesus and develop our relationship with Him. Why? Because whatever Jesus opens to us will be the activity in which Jesus will give us everything we need to do to accomplish it. Jesus, therefore, wants us to go through him to receive the tasks of His will. |
| 5 | When Paul and Silas were thrown into prison at Philippi, it appeared that the door to their ministry in Greece had been violently and firmly closed (Acts 16:22-35). They were beaten with rods and shackled to the wall in the deepest prison cell! From the human perspective, it seemed that Paul and Silas had failed. It seemed that they should get out of town as fast as possible to save their lives and to share Jesus in another town.But the reality of their situation was that their Lord had opened a door of ministry to a previous unreached group of men in prison. The Philippian jailer and his household became believers and became a significant nucleus of the new church in Philippi. From a human perspective, a door had been closed; from God’s perspective, Paul and Silas continued to minister exactly where God wanted them to. |
| 6 | So, do we take everything that happens to us as God’s will? No! Certainly not. But our goal is to build our love relationship with Jesus Christ ever stronger, so that wherever we go we will remain in God’s will and be ready to share Jesus in the place and situation we find ourselves!When people oppose us, we may try to take matters into our own hands to accomplish what we think God wants. This reveals that we do not really believe Jesus is the door for our lives. If we did, we would assume that through Christ we have access to everything that we need for God to do in and through us.God used Paul and Silas, giving them all they needed – the earthquake, the opening of locked doors and chains – so that they and all the prisoners could escape. But Paul and Silas, being in their close love relationship with God thru Christ, was anchored to Jesus and maintained their original focus – to share the Gospel of Jesus to the Philippians. So, humanly we would have expected them to run because like us, they would have seen their imprisonment as Satan’s way of stopping the ministry. But no, they still looked for ways to share Christ in every circumstance. So, they began with the jailer who was about to kill himself because he knew the Roman law would require his life for letting all the prisoners escape even if it wasn’t his fault. Paul saved his life! Paul and Silas witnessed to him and his family. The jailer became a believer as did all his family. Then they cared for Paul and Silas and the prisoners who also believed. And because Paul and Silas saw this Jesus as the open door, God found a key lay person, the jailer, upon which the Philippian church was anchored. |
| 7 | So, what that means for me and you is that Jesus becomes our door as we grow our love relationship with God. The closer we get, the more obvious it will become what God desires for us to do for Him – right here and right now. And whatever that is, Jesus promises God will give all that we need to be successful. Jesus is the door through which God wants us to go! We miss the mark when we decide which things God opens to us and which things God closes to us! We miss the mark because we put ourselves in the “driver’s seat”!I believe we are stepping through the door of Jesus by putting the strategic plan the Council adopted earlier this year. Please be clear that God will give us all we need to make it a success!Amen |