

New Breakthroughs
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So, what's holding you back? If you haven't accomplished what you thought you would accomplish by now – what's holding you back?

If you immediately think that certain people or circumstances are holding you back – your thinking might be part of the problem! Do you know that some barriers that hinder your growth and hold you back in life are actually in your mind?

This includes barriers to success, freedom and joy.
 Barriers to relationships.
 Barriers to being who we are in Christ.
 Barriers to attaining our prophetic destiny.
 Barriers are common to all people!
 And we all need to learn how to break through them!

This is the last sermon in our series called All Things New. Today I'm preaching on New Breakthroughs.

Last week I preached on New Mercies and talked about how Israel was destroyed and went into captivity because of their unrepentant sin. We saw how the prophet Jeremiah prophesied hope because God's mercies are new every morning.

The prophet Micah prophesied to the people who were in exile that God would eventually set them free and bring them home to Israel. Micah 2:13 – AMP – says:

The Breaker (the Messiah) will go up before them. They will break through, pass in through the gate and go out through it, and their King will pass on before them, the Lord at their head.

I love that image: Jesus is the Breaker who goes before us leading us into breakthroughs and restoration. He is the God of New Breakthroughs!

I chose that title for a reason. Some people think breakthroughs are a one-time thing and once you experience breakthrough you will never need to break through again. Wrong! For one thing – we need to experience breakthroughs in different areas of our lives: physical, spiritual, emotional, personal and relational.

And then – there are different levels of breakthrough. For instance, you might experience a breakthrough in dealing with anger at work – but you still need to experience that breakthrough at home.

In life there will always be barriers to break through.

As they say – when you reach new levels you face new devils! There are barriers that hold all of us back from achieving God’s best for our lives that we must break through in faith.

1. The first barrier we must break through is usually in our mind

All of us have barriers we need to break through or something we need to overcome in life! We’re called overcomers because there are things we must overcome! Overcoming is not the absence of problems or barriers – it’s defeating those problems or barriers. Overcoming is not being immune from the enemy’s attacks – overcoming is resisting the devil and watching him flee!

The first key to breaking through barriers is to identify what they are. Now, there are real barriers in life that we must deal with. Things like physical ability or discrimination based on age, race or gender. But there are other barriers in our mind like unbelief, fear of failure or a victim mentality.

So, the first barrier we must deal with is the barrier in our minds because many times it turns out that they are not actual barriers at all. They were just barriers in our minds.

For instance, have you ever heard of the sound barrier? Before 1947, it was believed that the speed of sound created an actual physical barrier for aircraft and pilots. As airplanes approach the speed of sound – 768 MPH – a shock wave forms which causes violent shaking, loss of lift and loss of control.

Some scientists actually believed that the sound barrier was like a brick wall – if you tried to go through it, your plane would disintegrate and so would you! The unknown caused breaking the sound barrier to be a very scary thing. It was also scary because in attempting to break the sound barrier, several planes went out of control and crashed, killing some pilots.

In 1947, Chuck Yeager began piloting the Bell XS-1 in another attempt to break the sound barrier. The U.S. Air Corps did not know if it could be done safely or not, but Yeager still wanted to try to break the sound barrier. Every day he would fly the plane a little closer to supersonic speed. The airplane would get very bumpy and almost go out of control. Yeager would go back down and try to find out why this was happening.

On October 14, 1947, Yeager decided to try something new. As he approached the sound barrier, he encountered the same turbulence as before – but instead of backing off – he slammed the throttle forward and literally punched his way through the sound barrier. And suddenly – on the other side of the sound barrier – the flight was totally smooth! There was no turbulence, no explosion, no problems at all! Just smooth flying!

The sound barrier was thought to be impenetrable – but that was wrong.

Chuck Yeager said – “There never was really a sound barrier. The speed of sound was never a real problem. The only barrier that existed was in our minds as a result of past failures and past experiences!”

Wow! The same is true for us! I wonder how many things we think are barriers in life are not really barriers at all! They are just barriers in our minds due to past failures and experiences. Proverbs 23:7 says:

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

The point of this is Scripture is that you will live what you really believe. If you think you’re a loser, you’ll live like a loser. But if you think you’re an overcomer, you’ll live like an overcomer.

Your mind is a battlefield. Satan wants to conform us through his words. But God wants to transform us through His Word. Romans 12:2 says:

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

The key to transformation and breakthrough is renewing your mind. That’s why you must take your thoughts captive – rather than be a captive to your thoughts!

To renew our minds we must recognize thoughts that are not from God. Then we must resist those thoughts and replace them with the truth of God’s word.

You renew your mind by choosing to believe God’s word over Satan’s words or your feelings or your circumstances. You’ll never live above what you believe! That’s why you must break through the barrier in your mind before you will experience a breakthrough in your life! You will never change the way you live until you change the way you think!

2. The closer you get to breakthrough – the harder it becomes

When a woman is about to give birth to a child, the contractions get stronger and more frequent. The closer she gets – the harder it gets. That’s the same thing that happened when Chuck Yeager approached the sound barrier. The closer he got – the more violent the pressure and shaking became.

The same thing happens in our lives! The closer we get to a break through, the harder things get. Everything that can be shaken is shaken and the pressure gets harder. Why is that? For two reasons. The first reason is that God uses shaking to get rid of things in our lives that hold us back. Hebrews 12:26-27 says:

God has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken... so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

God allows shaking in our lives to show us areas of weakness. We see this clearly when we fall apart under pressure and we would not see it any other way! But in addition to showing us our weakness – God wants to show us His strength! Shaking forces us to quit trusting in ourselves and to start trusting God. Faith is always required to break through barriers.

The other reason for shaking is not from God! We have an enemy who does not want us to break through! He wants us to stay stuck right where we are. So, when he sees us trying to break through barriers – he'll apply pressure in order to tempt us to draw back and give up! That's because he does not want you to breakthrough and advance!

Every time in the Bible someone came into a new anointing or position – the enemy attacked. For instance, 2 Samuel 5:17-20 says:

When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold.

Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" The Lord answered him, "Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you." So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them.

He said, "As waters break out, the Lord has broken out against my enemies before me." So that place was called Baal Perazim.

The Philistines deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. Do you know who the Rephaim were? Giants! I'm sure the Philistines strategically chose that place to attack because giants caused fear in most people. But they forgot who they were fighting! Remember – David had already defeated a giant in the name of the Lord! So – he trusted the Lord more than he feared a giant.

David focused on the size of His God – not the size of his problems! David did not even acknowledge the place as a place for giants! Instead he called it Baal Perazim which means Lord of the Breakthroughs! And for us to overcome giants and break through barriers – we must do the same thing! We must replace the giants in our minds with something bigger – actually Someone bigger – the Lord of the Breakthroughs!

I'm not talking about just having a positive mental attitude. I'm not talking about being in denial. There really are giants we must face and overcome!

I'm talking about replacing a natural mindset with a supernatural one.
I'm talking about replacing walking by sight with walking by faith.
I'm talking about having more faith in the Lord of the Breakthroughs than we have in the giants we must defeat!

Some of us have more faith in our giants than in our God.
More faith in our problems than in the Problem Solver.

More faith in our sickness than in our Healer.
 More faith in our strongholds than in our Deliverer.
 More faith in our lack than in our Provider.

Some people have more faith in the devil than God!
 They'll believe something bad over something good.
 They'll believe a lie over the truth.
 But if you want to break barriers you must face the giants in your land and defeat them with the truth of God's word!

Quit giving in to the giant called "I can't" and start believing "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Stop giving in to the giant of fear and start saying, "If God is for me, who can be against me!"

The enemy wants you to give up your faith in the Lord of the Breakthroughs – so he causes things to shake, rattle and roll! But that's a sign you're getting closer to your break through! You've come too far to turn back now! I know it's hard – but don't back down. I know this is hard because:

3. Breaking barriers can cause fear

As we approach the barriers we need to break through – the shaking gets worse – so the potential for fear increases. Fear is a result of facing a barrier we don't think we can break through. We say things like:

"I don't think I can make it through this situation alive."

"I can't go back to school. I'm too old."

"I can't break out of this destructive relationship – it's the best I can hope for."

"I can't get ahead in life because I don't have what it takes."

All these objections are based on fear and fear holds us back. So – we must have the faith to break through barriers rather than drawing back in fear. Hebrews 10:35-39 says:

Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

You see – Satan wants us to believe that if we press forward we will be destroyed – but the truth is destruction comes when we shrink back!

So, we are not those who shrink back or give up!

We press through until we breakthrough!

And when we do – we discover what Chuck Yeager discovered:

4. When you break through a barrier, suddenly everything changes

When we break through a barrier – suddenly the way opens before you!
The unclear becomes clear! Lies are replaced with truth! Darkness is replaced with light!

So – don't stop believing for a breakthrough! Jesus said in Matthew 17:20:

I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

What must we do to break barriers? It all starts with faith in God. What seemingly impossible situations have caused you to say, "I can't"? Instead, you should say what Paul said in Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

When you have faith in God, He can do through you that which looks impossible to you!

Did you know that running a mile in under 4 minutes was once thought to be impossible? However, on May 6, 1954 Englishman Roger Bannister ran a mile in 3 minutes, 59.4 seconds. Nobody had ever done this in the history of mankind. But do you know how long it took for someone else to beat this record? 6 weeks! The 4-minute mile has now been achieved by over 1400 runners. What was thought to be a barrier was broken through and suddenly many people began to believe and achieve.

What's holding you back? What's your impossible situation? What barrier do you need to push through?

- Maybe it's as simple as taking steps to initiate a friendship.
- For some of you it is getting back into some ministry after allowing yourself to sit on the sidelines for a long time.
- Maybe it's applying for a promotion or a new job altogether.
- Or it may be going back to school and finally getting your degree even though it has been years since you've been in school.

"Where have you been saying to God, 'I can't!'" Jesus would say to you, "Break those barriers by having faith in God!"

As I close – I want to remind you that almost everyone in the Bible who was used by God first responded with the words "I can't." They had to break through that barrier in their minds before they were used by God.

Moses had to break through the barrier of not being able to speak well.

Jeremiah had to break through the barrier of thinking he was too young.

Abraham had to break through the barrier of thinking he was too old.

Sarah had to break through the barrier of thinking it was impossible for her to have a child.

Peter had to break through the barrier of thinking he was unqualified for ministry because he denied Christ 3 times.

Gideon had to break through the barrier of low self-esteem and thinking he was too weak and his family was too poor.

Deborah had to break through the barrier of thinking she could not be used by God because she was a woman.

Esther had to break through the barrier of her race.

The woman at the well had to break through the barrier of her race and her gender and the fact that she had multiple failed marriages.

Thomas had to break through the barrier of doubt.

Joseph had to break through the barrier of his family rejecting him, the barrier of false accusation, and the barrier of false imprisonment.

David had to break through the barrier of being surrounded by enemies who wanted to kill him.

And when David defeated his enemy at Baal Perazim – he said in 2 Sam. 5:20

As waters break out, the Lord has broken out against my enemies.

In other words – David described God's power as a flood. When the Lord of the Breakthroughs shows up – he releases a flood of power, a flood of goodness, a flood of favor, a flood of blessing!

You can face closed doors in your career for a long time, when suddenly the Lord of the Breakthroughs releases a flood of favor and opens doors for you. You can fight a sickness for a long time when suddenly the Lord of the Breakthroughs releases a flood of healing! You can experience relationship problems for a long time when suddenly the Lord of the Breakthroughs releases a flood of restoration!

Stop believing for a trickle of blessing and start believing for a flood of blessing!
Break through your barriers by having faith in the God of breakthroughs!
Even when you face a valley full of giants – call on the Lord of the Breakthroughs and He will get you through!!

You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you!
If God is for you – who can be against you?