

BREAKTHROUGH, Week 1: “Who You Are”

Sermon Outline

Introduction:

- Introduce the concept of the need for breakthroughs in life when feeling stuck, defeated, or overwhelmed.
- Emphasize that breakthroughs in life, whether spiritual, emotional, or mental, start with knowing who you truly are.

I. Misconceptions About Identity

- Highlight common misconceptions about personal identity, such as associations with nationality, career, or external characteristics.
- Share anecdotes or stories that illustrate how people often misunderstand their true identity.

II. The World's Voices vs. God's Voice

- Discuss the conflicting messages about identity from the world and the media, which often lead to confusion.
- Present Genesis 1:27 as a biblical foundation for understanding that humans are created in God's image, emphasizing the importance of recognizing this truth.

III. The Danger of Letting External Factors Define You

- Explain how allowing external factors, like possessions, achievements, or social status, to define one's identity can lead to disillusionment and emptiness.
- Share a personal story or testimonial about how realizing the difference between what you have and who you are can be transformative.

IV. Discovering Who God Says You Were Before Trusting Jesus

- Present Ephesians 2:1–3 to illustrate the state of humanity before surrendering to Jesus, emphasizing our sinful nature and disobedience.
- Convey the message of God's mercy and love, as seen in Ephesians 2:4–5, which transforms believers and grants them salvation.

V. Embracing Who You Are When You Surrendering to Jesus

- Share scriptures like John 1:12, John 15:15, and Romans 8:2 to illustrate the transformative power of accepting Jesus.
- Explain that through Jesus, believers become children of God, His friends, and recipients of the Spirit's power.

VI. Embracing Your True Identity

- Emphasize that understanding your identity in Christ is key to experiencing spiritual, emotional, and mental breakthroughs.
- Share personal experiences or stories of breakthroughs that occurred after embracing one's identity in Christ.

VII. Conclusion: Pursuing Breakthrough Through Your True Identity

- Encourage listeners to reflect on areas of their lives where they need breakthroughs.
- Remind them that nothing is impossible with God, and encourage them to confidently embrace their identity in Christ as a foundation for overcoming challenges and experiencing breakthroughs.

BREAKTHROUGH, Week 1: “Who You Are”

Sermon Notes

Introduction:

- Everyone needs a Breakthrough from time to time
- You feel stuck... Defeated... Overwhelmed... the future feels bleak
- We need a spiritual, emotional, and mental breakthrough

BREAKTHROUGH STARTS WHEN YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

Q: What would your answer be, if I asked you Who Are You?

- My family comes from England and Native American
- My Grandfather was in WWII
- My Father served during the Vietnam war
- I joined the Airforce and served during Desert Shield and Desert Storm

Or, would you say...

- I am 53
- I am married
- I have four children and grandchildren
- I am the Lead Pastor at New Life Church
- I like to fly airplanes

While those are part of your life, none of them tell me who you are

MAN HAS SOME CRAZY THOUGHTS ON WHO YOU ARE...

Story: my roommate at my Air Force Tech school... said we are an experiment from aliens on another planet

Some people say that you are part of a primordial goop and nothing more than Billions and Trillions of cells

Our sexuality culture: You are who you believe you are...

- Born male but identify as female
- Born female but identify as male
- Transsexual
- Homosexual
- Bisexual

Genesis 1:27 (NLT) So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

IF YOU LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF THIS WORLD... YOU WILL NEVER KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

We get confused with who we are... especially when it comes to...

- Skin color
- Economic Status
- What country you come from

God doesn't look at those things...

We confuse what I have with who I am

- If what you have defines you... then you're leaning your ladder against the wrong wall

We confuse who I am with where I am...

- The part of the country you live in
- The part of town you live
- The job you hold
- The school you attend
- The degree you have

Story: elementary and Junior high school was very difficult for me.... It was my sophomore year that I started to believe "I am smart" and all of my grades turned around!

God knows where you are... but these are not benefits or restrictions to Who You Are

The BIG QUESTION: who does God say I am?

- Until you know who God says you are there is no way to experience a real authentic breakthrough
- Spiritual, emotional, or mental
- You're stuck until you start to believe who God says you are
- God Says... Who You Were Before Jesus:

Ephesians 2:1–3 (NLT) Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

GOOD NEWS: God didn't leave us like this...

Ephesians 2:4–5 (NLT) But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)

Who Are You (with Jesus)

John 1:12 (NLT) ... to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 15:15 (NLT) I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.

Romans 8:2 (NLT) And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

God's word goes on to say...

2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT) For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

THIS IS WHO YOU ARE!

ONCE YOU CONFIDENTLY KNOW WHO YOU ARE... BREAKTHROUGH CAN HAPPEN!

Personal Encounter with Spiritual Breakthrough:

- Forgiving a former boss (pastor) who wounded me deeply
- There was a time in my young adult years that every story about me had to be exaggerated to make me look larger than life
- There was a time when alcohol and partying had a grip on my life

Conclusion: If you want Breakthrough it starts with believing who God says you are

- What do you need Breakthrough from?
- Nothing is impossible with God...

BREAKTHROUGH, Week 1: "Who You Are"

Transcript

Well, hey, my name is Jeff Baker. I'm the lead pastor here. I want to welcome everybody that's out our Kearney campus. Okay, I want to welcome everybody that's out on North Platte campus or Ogallala campus and everybody that's online. With us. We're one church in multiple locations today as we get ready to kick off a brand new teaching series called Breakthrough. But today is back to school Sunday, I'm making it known as back to school comm on Bebo.

Mountain right now, if you're a mom or a dad and your kids are going back to school, you should be totally excited about that. Especially if they're elementary age. Okay. All right. All right. I'm way beyond that. I'm way beyond that age. But I still feel that on the inside now at this stage of life when you don't have kids at home anymore, and now you're around your grandchildren as well. Now, when it's back to school Sunday, here's all it says to me at 53 years old, Jeff, you're just getting older. That's all it says to me. I know it says something else to some of you.

Right? But to me, it's just like, holy cow. Where did the year go? Right? What is going on here? One thing I know about life is this. Everybody needs a break through

our churches called New Life church, to have new life means you have to have a breakthrough. You have to go from one place to another place. And in our lives, all of us are looking for a breakthrough. We might be looking for a breakthrough relationally like in a marriage? Like, wow, would it be awesome if we had a breakthrough? And we had better communication? Wouldn't it be awesome if we had a breakthrough, and you know, we were closer together. Some of you are looking for a breakthrough. Even in your, your occupation. Many of you are looking for break through spiritually, you might be looking for a breakthrough in the sense of like, I want to break through this, this lack of faith, this question that I have about God, I want to break through and I want to land the plane, I want to solidify it, I want to say this is who God is. Some of you need a break through spiritually because you're dealing with addiction. And you're wanting to have break through some of you need a break through because sin has captured your heart and you're just wanting to figure out how to get that sin nature broke in you so that you can have new life, you can have the breakthrough. Some of you feel stuck. You feel stuck in life. You feel stagnant in life, and you need a breakthrough. Some of you feel defeated. And you just feel like man, life's crashing in on me. And I just don't know, like, how am I gonna get through this and you need a breakthrough. You need a breakthrough of knowing Jesus the power of Christ in your life, you need a break through some of you need a break through because you remember what it was like to be on fire for God. And you want to get back to that place again. But you just don't know how to get there because it was happening in your teen years. And in your young adult years. And there was this fire. This is just revival of of Jesus happening in your life. And now you're in your 40s or your 50s or your 60s. And you're wondering, how do I get that back, I need a break through. Some of you just feel overwhelmed. And you need to break through some of you, you're sitting here today, and you're thinking about the future. And the future seems bleak. Because of what you read in the news. And what you feel like you see happening on the planet. And what you see happening economically in our country are whatever you think you see, and some of you are just seeming like the future seems bleak. And you need a break through.

I think I would venture to say that if I had a chance to have coffee with every single one of you at all of our campuses, and I could sit down one on one one on one with you, where we could be a little more vulnerable with each other that you would be able to define the area of breakthrough that you're searching for.

It might be embarrassing. And you might you may not want to say it out loud. And at the coffee shop, you know, the gossip center of society. You You might lean in closely because you realize that people are listening three tables over to our conversation.

It's the coffee shop slife you might lean in and you might say it to me, you know very quietly because you're embarrassed about it. But in the end, all of us would say I need a breakthrough. That's what this series is all about. And over the next few weeks. I'm going to lay out for you something I felt like the Lord put on my heart for this church back in November of last year to speak to us at this very season at this very moment this Sunday has been planned since November. This back to school Sunday has been planned. This message has been the message that we felt like the Lord put on our hearts for you at this very moment for this very Sunday. You're not here

by accident,

none of you are here by accident. God has a purpose and a plan. He has a destiny for you. And today has been ordained by God. Today is a day where breakthrough starts to happen. Amen. And so this is where it starts. It all starts with this one question. Who are you?

That's where breakthrough starts. Breakthrough starts when you can answer the question. Who are you?

Now remember, I told you, I was preparing this and planning for this since last November. But this summer, I was sitting in St. Louis, Missouri, after speaking at a church there that Sunday morning, and I'm sitting at a restaurant, and across from me is this elderly pastor, retired pastor who had flown up from Florida for this weekend event, this family first event that I was speaking at. And he's an old time friend of mine. And we're there and we're chit chatting with one another. And he says to me, remember, he is this ordained Bishop that is like, just very wise in his years and has a lot of experience. And we're talking and he's not one of those kind of guys that wants to talk about the sports, if he can put it if we can just put it that way. He's not one of those kind of guys, that's going to be content, just talking about the weather. He's not even one of those kinds of guys, that's going to be content with me just telling him about my family. At a certain moment, he's going to dive deep and he dove deep, and he dove deep, quick. And me in my 53 years on this earth and thinking that I have got a little bit of wisdom that's coming because there are some gray hairs on me.

I got I got do I got like slammed. I got taken back to grade school in this moment. When he looked across the table at me, he said, Jeff, I'm writing another book. And he's written many books. I'm writing another book. And I want to ask you a question. I said, Okay, all right. I'm game for it. I mean, I don't know what I can offer to you. For your book, you see how instantly shall you set me up? Like I'm writing a book. And Jeff, I want to ask you a question about that book. I'm thinking to myself, like, wow, I'm going to add value to his book.

But that's not the way it was going at all.

He knew right where he had me. And he turns around, and he says to me, Jeff, let me ask you this question. Who is Jeff Baker?

And I sat there like you, who is Jeff Baker. And before I tell you what I started to say, I just want to say to you, who are you?

If you were in that seat, and you were asked, Who are you? What would you start to say? Because I'm going to tell you right now that

when I when that moment happened, I started to feel the heat. Sweat started to happen under the armpits.

Right? I started to get a little squirming and I started to answer him. And I started to answer him. I started to say like, well, I'm, I'm, you know, Jeff Baker, I'm, I was born here. I did. He goes, No, no, no. No, that that's not who you are.

Okay, okay, give me another shot. Give me another shot at this. And I took another run at it. And he goes, No, no, that's not who you are, either.

And I go, Oh, okay. All right, my bad. And then I went for the answer, which we're gonna talk about that today. But if I were to ask you today, who are you? You might give me answers like this? Well, it look my family comes from England and Native America. Right. That's that's the heritage. That's our background. My grandfather. He fought in World War Two as a paratrooper and he jumped on D Day my my father, he served in the in the US Air Force during the Vietnam War. I served in the Air Force during Desert Shield and Desert Storm, my son, he served in the United States Army and served a year in Afghanistan, and a year in Iraq. We are a people that we put faith, family and country that that's who we are, that's who we are. And you might give an answer like that. Or you might say, Well, I'm 53 years old, I got four children. I got you know, some grandchildren. I'm the Lead Pastor of New Life church, and I like to fly airplanes. That's who I am.

And although all of those things are part of your life, none of them tell us who you really are. None of them do.

None of those answers are really who you are. They're things about you, but they're not who you are. See, that's where the conflict happened at that table. The conflict happened to the table because I was trying to describe some parts of my life, but it wasn't really who I am. You might it might seem to you

This is semantics. But I'm telling you, it's more than semantics. This is the bedrock for breakthrough. If you want breakthrough in your life, you first have to know who you are. And in this world that we live, this world has some crazy ideas of who you are. I remember back when I was in the airforce, I was in tech school. And, you know, we

had to, we're in kind of dormitory. And so I got to, I'm sharing a room with this other gentleman. And one night, we're just kind of talking. And then he says, you know, you know, I think we are. And I go no, man, well, what do you think? Who do you think we are? He was I think we're just one big experiment from some aliens on another planet that came here to this earth, and they found it to be inhabitable. And they started life called humanity. And one day, they're going to come back and they're gonna purge this earth of all of its imperfections. And I was like, that's interesting.

This is some of the ideas that people have of who we are other people think that you're just from some primordial soup, that goop that was there that some cells developed, and then billions and trillions of cells developed. And then here you are flesh and bone and brain and tissue that you're walking around.

In our sexuality, culture that we live in right now. And 2023 is basically whoever you think you are, than you are, doesn't matter what you were born as you can be born as any sex and you can identify as anything you want. You can identify as being transsexual, homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual, it's up to you, you do whatever you want. That's the culture in which we live in right now, if you were to ask somebody who are you, they might define themselves, even based on our sexuality, culture. But we know this without a shadow of a doubt in Christianity based on God's Word that in Genesis, chapter one, verse 27, starting to define who I am, so God created human beings in His what image in his own image. And in the image of God, He created them, both male and female, He created them, guys, you just need to know something based on God's word that we are created by God. Right, and we're created in God's image. And the way that God formed us in the womb was perfect. And the way that we came out of the womb was I was perfect in God's image. That's a part of who you are. That's starting now to define who you are. But if you listen to the voice of the world, you'll never know who you are. Because the voice of the world is like, it's confused. It has got all of these these like unbiblical mindsets of trying to define who you are based on based on wealth and status. And, you know, education, and you know, the list goes on and on and on. We get confused with who we are, especially when it comes to things like skin color, economic status, and even what country you come from.

But here's what I find interesting about those three, land mind incidents, is that none of those matter to God truly isn't when God looks down from heaven upon you and me, that he doesn't see our skin color.

You realize that when God looks down from heaven, he doesn't go, oh, black, white, brown, the guy doesn't look down from heaven and go, Oh, rich, poor middle class. God doesn't look down from heaven and go, Oh, United States, Mexico, Canada.

Choice, a guy doesn't see those same borders that we see. God doesn't see those same dividing factors that we see. And so what happens? Those are our uniquenesses. These are the things that make us unique. And those are the very things that the enemy likes to exploit, to try to divide us and push us away from one another. And the real reason for that is because we get confused with what I have, with who I am. We get confused. We get we confuse what I have with who I am. And what you have isn't who you are.

It's never been that way.

What you have, what skin color you have, it's not who you are, what education status you have, it's not who you are, what economic status you have. It's not who you are, what country you come from, it's not who you are.

There again, just parts of your story, but they're not who you are, and we confuse what I have with who I am all the time. Another thing we do is this We confuse who I am with where I am.

That's another trap. Confusing who you are with where you are. Such as this, like, well, I'm from Nebraska, I'm just a redneck from Nebraska.

You gotta say it with a little D

We're kind of like,

No, I'm not gonna sit.

Or it could be like this, I'm just, I'm gonna do two lives in the city.

And you're not defined by geographically where you live. That's not who you are, what part of town you live in? Do you live in a rich part of town or the poor part of town? Again, that doesn't, that's not who you are, what your job is, what school you attend, or you attended, what degree you have, or what degree you're working on. None of those things are who you are. So we can't confuse who I am with where I am, either. And by the way, God knows where you are. He knows where you are, God has not lost track of any of you. He knows exactly where you are.

He knows where you are in life. He knows what you're doing in life. God knows where you are. But these things are not benefits, or restrictions to who you are. So the obvious question, then is this.

If you want to know who you are, then you have to go back to God and God's word. Because we only really, truly find out who we are from God's Word. Then until you know who God says that you are, then you'll never experience spiritual breakthrough.

It's only when you start to discover who you are in Christ, that now you've laid the foundation for spiritual breakthrough to start to happen. And until that moment, you're stuck, you're stuck right where you are. So one of the things that we've got to do if we want to see break through in our lives is we got to break off of ourselves.

Everything that the world says that we are

all the pressures that the world say that you are, and you got to lay those things aside, you got to let those things burn, in a sense, okay, because that's not your identity. And we have to find out who we are in Christ. So let me do that for the remainder of our time together. Who are you? Well, first off, God said something about who you are or who you were, when you didn't have Jesus in your life. Let me let me just show you what I mean by that.

Ephesians chapter two verses one through three, says this. Listen to who it says that you are.

Once you were dead, because you're disobey God's your disobedience and your many sins, you used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil, the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the Spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desire and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature, we were subjected to God's anger just like everyone else. At one point, every single one of us in this room, were at this stage, this is who we were, we were disobedient in our sin. We were, we had, we were absent from the joy and the love and the power and the presence of Jesus in our lives. We were satisfying our sinful nature, instead of the nature of a Christ centered nature in our lives. This is who all of us, all of us, at one point or another, this is who we were. Some of you are still there right now. And I want you to know today, it's okay. It's alright. I'm glad that you're here today. Because this is the church of breakthrough. You too can experience new life, if you stay on the course of discovering who Jesus is. So this is who we were. But good news is this. God didn't leave us there. Look at the very next verses the verse four and five, says, But God is so rich in mercy. And he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, that's who we were. He gave us life, when He raised us from what raised Christ from the dead, it is only by God's grace that you have been saved.

This again, starts to draw the picture of who you are, you are a person, a human being that has been delivered and set free only by God's grace and God's grace alone.

Not by your goodness, not by how much money you've given to God through the church, not by how many acts of kindness that you have done, but by one thing and one thing only by the grace, and the mercy and the love of the Father, you and I were set free when Jesus Christ gave His life on the cross and He rose again from the grave.

That's who you are. You are a person saved by grace. Amen. That's who you are. Right now. Now that you so for those of you who know Christ, now that you know Christ, who are you? Well, John, John 112 It says this about who you are now with Christ. He says to all who believed him, and accepted him being Jesus, okay. He gave the right to become children of God. So when the pastor looked at me across the table and he said, Who is Jeff Baker? You know the answer he was looking for, I'm a child of God. But if I sat down with you at Starbucks or another coffee shop, and I asked you, who are you, many of you, most of you would never start there. That was the premise of his problem that he was writing the book about is that many of us find our identity, other places. And so out of our mouth comes those things, although hidden in our heart is the truth. And God's word wants the truth, to come out and be the first thing that comes out of your mouth. The next time someone asks you, who are you, the very first thing you should say is this, I am a person saved by grace, I am a child of God.

See, once you start to know that, and you're confident with that, now spiritual breakthrough can start happening in your life. But that's not where it ends. John 1515 says this, I no longer Jesus said, I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends. Since I've told you everything the father told me. You're saved by grace, you're a child of God, and you are a friend of Jesus. Like, I don't know, if you've ever been around somebody who likes to drop names. You know what I mean by that, like, they know somebody that's got some authority or some power that is famous, and they like to say, they'd like to tell you how much they really know them.

When really the other person probably doesn't have a clue who they are. But they like to drop those names. Because it makes them feel powerful.

Okay, well, here's a name you can drop. And you can drop it anywhere you want. Because Jesus is the one who said it first. He says, you're my friend. If you want to drop a name somewhere, you go, hey, you know who I know, I know, Jesus, you want to know who's my friend is? My friend is Jesus. And you know what? Jesus would stand there? And he would have your back and you'd be like, Yep, that's right.

I mean, I don't know a better name to drop. You can drop all kinds of other names. You could drop names of people that are in the movie industry. You can drop names of people that are political industry, you can drop names of people that are executives, you can drop all kinds of names, but there's no name that trumps the name of Jesus. Right?

That's who you are. You are a friend of Jesus, come on, turn to three people really quick and look him in the eye and say you're a friend of Jesus, come on, they need to know that people need to know.

People need to know.

Or you starting to discover a little bit of who you are. Are you catching my drift? It's not just your lineage. It's not just your education. It's not where you grew up. That's not who you are. This is who you are. You are saved by grace, a child of God, a friend of Jesus. Romans, chapter eight, verse two, because you thought it was over. We're not done.

Romans chapter eight, verse two, and because you belong to him, the power of the lit life giving spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads the death. You are saved by grace, grace, a child of God, a friend of Jesus, and you are free, my friends, from the sins of your past, freed, you are freed, and you can walk in that freedom because that's who you are. That's good news.

Now, look, this sermon could actually go on for hours,

about what the Bible says of who you are. And some of you are Bible scholars, and you're going, you didn't even mention these other scriptures. Praise God, that there is more evidence in God's word than what I just gave you. That's what I would say to that answer. Right? And to everyone else that that goes, Hey, look, we've got things to do today. They would say thank you for letting me discover those in God's Word by myself.

But God's word goes on to say this about you in Second Timothy one, seven. Listen to what God says about you. For God has not given you a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self discipline.

You are more powerful than you think.

You have a greater capacity to love than you think.

And you have a greater determination to be self disciplined meaning to say no to sin, and to say yes to Jesus than you think. Why? Because God has not given you a spirit of fear and timid and timidity, but God gave you power through the Holy Spirit. God gave you the ability to love through His Spirit. God is the one who gives you The power to say no to the things we say no to and say yes to the things we're supposed to say yes to, you didn't get that on your own. It is a gift by God because you've been saved by grace, a child of God, a friend of Jesus, who is walking in freedom, and is full of the power of the Holy Spirit as you submit your life to Jesus Christ. That's who you are.

That's who you are. And once you start to believe, confident, confidently believe who you are. Now, breakthrough can happen in your life.

I've seen this kind of spiritual break through my life over and over and over again.

I remember when I got severely wounded in here, and in here by a spiritual leader called a pastor.

Yep.

I wish that all pastors including myself, were perfect. But we are not, we're just human beings. And I got severely wounded and the words that he said, the actions that he took towards me, they, it's like, they landed here, and they landed here. And it started to define who I am.

And it took about a year's worth of time

of process and prayer, to eradicate that completely, to actually get to that whole root and pull that out. And during that time, during that year, it was a time of prayer. It was a time of surrender. It was a time of seeking God, there was a there was a unlearning, and an unwavering of what man said about me to get back to what God said about me. I know that journey, my friends, some of these journeys of a breakthrough are not easy. I'm not talking about

breakthrough that's quick and easy all the time. It's just snapping your fingers and everything transforms and you're headed this direction. And now you're headed that direction. I'm telling you, sometimes God's breakthrough takes time. And it requires diligence. And if you don't, if you're not discovering who you are, you're not going to finish

knowing who you are transformed you. And in that process. In that process, God was removing what man said I was, and he was instilling who he says I am.

I remember back as like a college age young adult kind of a student, and just wanting my life to shine a little brighter than others. And as I would tell a story about myself, I would exaggerate the details that make my life look bigger than what it actually was.

I remember the day that I kind of came to my senses, and I said, What am I what do I? Why do I do that? Man, what was happening was I started, I was starting to develop my spiritual journey at that time, early on in my spiritual journey. And I was starting to learn who I am in Christ. And as I learned who I am in Christ, I no longer had to exaggerate the story to make my life look bigger than what it really was. Because my security and my identity was starting to be found in Christ.

That's spiritual breakthrough. As you start to learn who you are, there was a time in my life when alcohol and partying was my go to it was before following Jesus. But when I surrendered my life to Christ, and I started to learn that Jesus, you saved me by Grace, I'm a child of God. I'm a friend of Jesus. Guess what drifted away in my life, the desire for the alcohol and the desire for the party life. It's drifted away. Why? Because I was replacing all of that with who I am in Christ. Church, I'm just gonna say to you today, if you want spiritual breakthrough in your life, phase one, step one, and the rest of the steps there'll be given to you throughout this series, so you don't want to miss any of them. But it all starts with who you are, and who you are in Christ. So what breakthrough do you need today?

What freedom do you need in your life? What new life do you need? Because it starts with first inviting the Holy Spirit to come in and rewire the way you see yourself. It starts by coming, coming to the Lord and saying, Lord, I want to believe this helped me in my unbelief of this though.

Like, I don't believe some of these things right now. But I want to believe them. Would you help me get there? It starts their church. It starts by simply saying, God opened my heart in my mind up to you. And it's just like, it's just like, encouraging yourself with these words. I am saved by grace. I am a child of God. I am a friend of Jesus. I have the power of the Holy Spirit.

walk in freedom.

It starts right there. So why don't you stand with me and let's pray.

And as we pray at all of our campuses, I just want you to start this prayer by repeating after me.

I am saved by grace.

I am a child of God.

I am a friend of Jesus.

I have the power of the Holy Spirit

to live a life of freedom.

Now, Father, I pray over this church and I ask you to, to that you would let that those words so deep into their hearts, they wouldn't just be words that were spoken out of their mouth, but they would really be reminded, this is who I am. All these other things about my life. They're all good details. And they all matter my lineage. It matters. Yes, what my family did it matters, all of those things. What I'm doing now it all matters. It's significant, but it's not important when it comes to who I am, who I am is defined by you, Lord, and you alone. Let this church be reminded of that and let this be the origin, the beginning the foundation of spiritual breakthrough in their life. And everybody said, Amen.

BREAKTHROUGH, Week 1: "Who You Are"

Small Group Guide

Icebreaker: Share a Little-Known Fact About Yourself

- Begin with a fun icebreaker to help group members get to know each other better. Each person should share one interesting or little-known fact about themselves. This can be a light-hearted way to build connections within the group.

Discussion Questions:

1. What comes to mind when you think of the word "breakthrough"? Can you share a personal experience of a breakthrough in your life, whether big or small?

- Encourage everyone to reflect on moments when they felt they had overcome a significant obstacle or experienced personal growth.

2. How do you think people in today's world often define themselves or determine their identity?

- Discuss societal influences, such as social media, career, relationships, and material possessions, that often impact how people perceive themselves.

3. Do you agree or disagree with the idea that our true identity is not solely based on external factors or accomplishments? Why or why not?

- Encourage participants to share their personal beliefs about the relationship between external factors and identity.

Bible Passages for Discussion:

Ephesians 2:1–3 (NLT) - Discuss the transformation from our former selves to who we are in Christ.

Ephesians 2:4–5 (NLT) - Explore God's grace and how it shapes our identity.

John 1:12 (NLT) - Reflect on the privilege of becoming children of God through faith.

John 15:15 (NLT) - Discuss the transformation from being servants to becoming friends of Jesus.

Romans 8:2 (NLT) - Examine the freedom and transformation that comes with belonging to Christ.

2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT) - Reflect on the qualities and characteristics that God instills in us.

Discovering Who You Are

4. In your opinion, why do people sometimes struggle with understanding who they truly are?

- Explore potential reasons, including societal pressures, comparisons to others, or past experiences that may have shaped self-perception.

5. What do you think it means to "discover who God says you were before Jesus"?

- Invite participants to reflect on this concept and consider how it might differ from their previous self-perception.

6. Can anyone share a personal story of how their identity or self-perception changed after encountering Jesus or a significant spiritual experience?

- If anyone is comfortable, encourage them to share a brief testimony about their journey of faith.

Embracing Your True Identity

7. Based on the discussion so far, why is it important to embrace your true identity, especially in the context of pursuing breakthroughs in life?

- Encourage participants to connect the idea of self-acceptance with personal growth and resilience.

8. What are some practical ways to remind yourself of your identity in Christ on a daily basis?

- Share strategies for grounding oneself in their faith and identity, such as daily devotionals, Bible verses, or prayer practices.

9. Have you ever experienced a breakthrough in a challenging area of your life (e.g., forgiveness, personal habits, relationships) by embracing your true identity in Christ? If comfortable, share the story.

- Provide an opportunity for participants to discuss moments when their faith and identity played a significant role in overcoming obstacles.

Conclusion: Pursuing Breakthrough

10. As we conclude, what areas of your life do you feel you need a breakthrough in right now? How might understanding your true identity in Christ impact your approach to these challenges? - Encourage group members to consider specific areas where they are seeking growth or change and how their faith can guide them.

11. In light of today's discussion and the Bible passages we've read, what practical steps can you take to pursue breakthroughs in these areas while embracing your true identity in Christ? - Invite participants to brainstorm actionable steps they can take based on the insights gained during the discussion.

Closing Prayer

- Conclude with a brief prayer, asking for guidance, strength, and the ability to fully embrace their true identity in Christ as they pursue breakthroughs in life.

