

BREAKTHROUGH, Week 3: “Prayer”

Sermon Outline

I. Introduction

- Provide an overview of the sermon topic: Breakthrough through prayer.
- Emphasize the importance of understanding who we are and believing in God's promises.

II. Common Perceptions of Prayer

- Discuss the common view of prayer as a religious practice for asking God for needs.
- Share relatable examples like bedtime prayers and mealtime prayers.
- Highlight that many people feel their prayers go unanswered.
- Insert a humorous anecdote about a college student's prayer during an exam.

III. Jesus' Perspective on Prayer for Breakthrough

- Emphasize that Jesus takes prayer seriously.
- Cite Matthew 17:14–20 where Jesus performs a healing miracle through prayer.
- Reference Mark 9:28–29, where Jesus explains that certain challenges can be overcome only through prayer and possibly fasting.

IV. Observations on Powerful Prayer for Breakthrough

- Explain that prayer is more than words; it's faith turned into words.
- Distinguish between mere suggestions and questions in prayer versus speaking with authority in alignment with God's will.
- Clarify that not all prayers for physical healing result in breakthrough, and provide examples.
- Share personal experiences related to prayer for breakthrough.

V. Discernment in Prayer

- Stress the importance of discernment in prayer for breakthrough.
- Discuss the significance of understanding the person's faith and desire for healing.
- Share a personal example regarding a man in Romania.
- Highlight that physical healing isn't always the ultimate breakthrough; healing of the soul is essential.

VI. The Role of Prayer and Fasting

- Explain that prayer for breakthrough becomes more potent when charged up with prayer and fasting.
- Use an analogy of an electric car that needs charging.
- Connect this to Mark Chapter 10, where disciples performed miracles but may have forgotten the true source of power.
- Discuss how persistent prayer and fasting keep the spiritual battery charged.

VII. The Power of Persistent Prayer

- Stress that persistent prayer leads to spiritual breakthrough.
- Provide an example of persistent prayer from Luke 11:5–10.

- Encourage the congregation not to give up on persistent prayer.
- Remind them that God loves and responds to persistent, faith-filled prayer.

VIII. Hope in Prayer

- Reassure the audience that God either heals or holds those who suffer closer.
- Encourage them to keep praying and fasting for breakthrough.
- Offer hope that their breakthrough, whether healing or spiritual growth, is coming.

IX. Conclusion

- Transition to a closing phase.
- Encourage the congregation to turn their environments into houses of prayer.
- Prompt them to let faith reignite and let their prayers be filled with faith.
- Stress the importance of persistently getting close to Jesus for powerful prayer for breakthrough.
- Mention biblical examples of breakthrough through persistence.
- Conclude with a call to action and prayer.

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Sermon Notes

Introduction:

- Breakthrough overview
- Who Are You?
- Believe the Promises

Topic: Prayer

- For many people... prayer is a religious thing we do to ask God for our needs
- Bedtime prayer for those we love
- Prayer before we eat a meal
- Few people ever feel like God answers their prayer

Joke: Like the college student who prayed before and during their final test

- Before they turned in the test the professor asked for each student to sign a document stating they didn't use any outside help while taking the exam
- All the students were turning in their tests except the one who had prayed
- He walked up to the professor and said... I don't think I can sign your document... I prayed before and during the exam for God to help me
- The professor said, let me see your exam...
- After looking at the answers the professor handed the exam back to the student and said “you can sign the document with a clear conscience, God didn't answer your prayer”

Jesus takes Prayer seriously...

The Bible shows us that our prayer is powerful for spiritual breakthrough...

Matthew 17:14–20 (NLT) At the foot of the mountain, a large crowd was waiting for them. A man came and knelt before Jesus and said, 15 “Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and suffers terribly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. 16 So I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn't heal him.”

17 Jesus said, “You faithless and corrupt people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.” 18 Then Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy, and it left him. From that moment the boy was well.

19 Afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, “Why couldn't we cast out that demon?”

20 “You don't have enough faith,” Jesus told them. “I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.”

Mark 9:28–29 (NLT) Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, “Why couldn't we cast out that evil spirit?”

29 Jesus replied, “This kind can be cast out only by prayer.”

Some manuscripts add... “prayer and fasting”

TWO OBSERVATIONS THAT MAKE PRAYER POWERFUL FOR BREAKTHROUGH:

PRAYER IS MORE THAN WORDS... IT'S FAITH TURNED INTO WORDS

Our prayer tends to be suggestions and questions

- God, if you will...
- God, it would be better...
- Instead of... God, I speak to this sickness and command it to leave in Jesus name

The secret to this prayer... Is it God's will?

- We don't control God... so, its good to know if it's God's will to heal

IMPORTANT: Jesus didn't heal everyone, everywhere...

- BUT, there are times when Jesus did heal everyone...

Examples:

Matthew 8:16 (NLT) That evening many demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. He cast out the evil spirits with a simple command, and he healed all the sick.

BUT... there were times when Jesus healed only the one (Pool of Bethesda)

John 5:1–6 (NLT) Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. 2 Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. 3 Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. 5 One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”

PERSONAL: I approach Prayer for Spiritual Breakthrough / Healing of others:

Q: Where is the person's faith?

- Do they have faith to believe in God for healing?
- If so, that is how I am going to pray
- If they tell me I am ready to go home and meet Jesus...
- Then I am going to pray differently

Personal Example: The man in Romania with metal in his eye

Not everyone is going to see a breakthrough in healing:

Illustration: Joni Eareckson Tada

- At 17 years old she broke her neck diving into the Chesapeake Bay
- Became a quadriplegic... paralyzed from the shoulders down
- BUT, God has used her life in a BIG way...
- 48 books...Radio Host... Speaker... Singer
- She said... many people have prayed for her to be healed over the years
- Quote: “I would rather be in the wheelchair knowing God than on my feet without Him”

PHYSICAL HEALING ISN'T ALWAYS THE BREAKTHROUGH

Quote: “One problem I have with faith healing is that it tends to be focused only on the physical aspect of healing. But Jesus always backed away when people came to him only to get their physical needs met. My goodness, he was ready to have you lop off your hand! His real interest was in healing the soul”

Discernment is needed in prayer for a breakthrough... (Holy Spirit)

Remember: Most of the breakthrough is internal, not external

The second observation that makes prayer powerful for breakthrough...

PRAYER FOR BREAKTHROUGH GETS CHARGED UP WITH PRAYER AND FASTING

Illustration: Like an electric car needs to be charged up before you can drive

Jesus told the disciples that prayer and fasting charge you up...

- Important: It appears that we have to keep the spiritual battery charged through prayer

Interesting fact: In Mark Chapter 10 the disciples went out and healed many and some cast out demons

- This is why Jesus got frustrated... (Jesus had given them the authority... I have a feeling the disciples forgot where the true power comes from...)
- Prayer for Breakthrough finds its power in the closeness with God prayer gives us
- Prayer for Breakthrough also finds its power in the closeness with God fasting gives us
- Our secret prayer & fasting is a form of persistence, which moves us closer to God

IMPORTANT: THE CLOSER YOU ARE TO GOD THROUGH PRAYER AND FASTING... THE MORE SPIRITUAL BREAKTHROUGH YOU WILL SEE!

Persistent Prayer = Power for Breakthrough

The disciples thought they knew how to help someone find a spiritual breakthrough...

- Because they had watched Jesus AND done it before
- You can know all about the ministry of Jesus AND have experienced Breakthrough from Prayer... BUT that's not where the power of Breakthrough comes from

The power comes from PERSISTENT prayer and fasting

Listen to the example Jesus gave us...

Luke 11:5–10 (NLT) Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, 6 ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ 7 And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can’t help you.’ 8 But I tell you this—though he won’t do it for friendship’s sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.

9 “And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Some of you stopped persistently asking, seeking, and knocking through private prayer

Someone needs to hear... Your breakthrough is one ASK and KNOCK away!

- You thought because God hadn’t answered yet... that He wasn’t going to answer...
- I am here today to remind you...
 - God loves persistent prayer...Desperate prayer...Faith turned in words
 - God loves sacrificial prayer & fasting

IN THE END, GOD EITHER HEALS OR HOLDS THOSE SUFFERING CLOSER

HOPE: Keep praying and fasting... the Breakthrough of healing or holding is coming!

In a minute we are going to sing the song

- We Ask, we Seek, we pray.
- I want you to know...Asking, Seeking, and Knocking = Persistent Prayer for Spiritual Breakthrough

The Bible is full of Examples of Breakthrough because of Persistence:

- Woman with the bleeding issue
- The friends lower their friend through the roof

CONCLUSION:

- Let's turn our campuses and living rooms into a house of prayer
- Let faith reignite... Let faith come from your lips as a prayer to God
- Let's Persistently get close to Jesus so the prayer for breakthrough has power!

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Transcript

All right, everybody, man, it's so good to see you guys here live at our corner campus. Come on, man, give it up for yourselves.

What in the world, I'm also saying a big hello to everybody worshipping with us and all the rest of our campuses. I'm just like many of you like I binge watch from time to time, I was just binge watching some Netflix last night on this show that came out like, like something about like how to live to 100 years old are talking about these, what they call blue zones that are around the world, these places where they have the highest capacity of people that live to 100 years old. And guess what I was so encouraged by, although there were a number of observations that they made about all these people, one of the things that they said was a common denominator was that all of them had faith in their life. Right? Now, it wasn't all faith in Christ, okay, just want to make sure we're clear. But they all had faith in their life, but they didn't just have faith, they activated that faith on a weekly basis, joining together with others in worship. So check it out, you guys are one this Sunday closer to living to 100 years old right now.

Way to go people way to go. It was just one of them. And I just thought that was I was so encouraged by that, like man alive. Here we are, man, we're investing into our own future, hey, well, we're right now in a series called Breakthrough. Okay. And the reason is because I just got this like, this hunch inside of me that a lot of us feel stuck, or we feel defeated, or we feel overwhelmed. We feel challenged in some capacity, where we just don't feel like anything's going to change or move from here. That could be in your spiritual life. That could be in your marriage, that could be in another relationship, maybe Judas in a place. And if you're not there, now, you will be because you once were, where we're going to be in these places that are just difficult. They're, they're challenging places, and we need a breakthrough. We need Jesus to show up in power and authority and rescue us. And we're desperate for that. And I know that many of you, if you're in a place where you need breakthrough, you probably are desperate God, I'm desperate for you to see to see a breakthrough in my life with this addiction, or the sin issue or this belief, or just by sheer issue, like maybe lack of faith. I don't know what it is. But I just know that we're human beings. And we're flawed. And we live on an imperfect planet. And we're going to have difficult challenges. And we're gonna need Jesus to bring a breakthrough. So that's why at the beginning of the series, we kind of talked a little bit about, okay, well, if you want to see a breakthrough in your life, you got to know who you are. Right? And we we broke down, like who you are. And we we defeated some of the ideas that who you are is like the accolades that come behind your name, the school you went to the degree that you have, how long you been married, right, what occupation you do the things that you've succeeded at. All right? And all of those we just said, no, no, that's not who you are. Alright, that might be your personality. It might be your accomplishments, but it's not who you are. The Bible says that you are saved by grace, you're a child of God, you're a friend of Jesus, you're full of His Spirit so that you can walk in his freedom. That's who you are. And when you know who you are, now you can start to achieve and see breakthrough in your life. Then we looked at last week, and we discussed the importance of believing in the promises of God. We taught that God's words full of promises, but do we believe them, just like the disciples, they forgot the promise, Jesus said, Hey, we're going to their side of the lake. So we learned last week that Jesus is with us. And that what he says he will finish and that Jesus is walking through the storm with us as well. We can see a break through. We just don't bail from the boat. We stick with Jesus because he's there with us. Amen. And that was good news as well. This week, what I want to talk to you about is this, you want to see a breakthrough in your life. Many breakthroughs come just by prayer. And you might go Well, Jeff, that's where we're at church. But I'm going to tell you today that prayer is we're going to break it down. We're going to look at it more, and we're going to discuss it because our prayers don't often line up with the prayers that God is looking for from our lives. Many of us, we pray, but our prayers are only generated around our needs. God, I need this God, I need that. Right? God, I need you to do this. God, I need you to do that. And many times our prayers are shallow, and they might just be like the bedtime prayer or they could be the prayer that happens at the meal. But unfortunately, as a pastor, I've had a lot of people come up to me and to simply say, you know, Jeff, I prayed but I don't feel like God's really ever answered my prayers. It's almost kind of like my prayers are hitting a glass ceiling. I hear about God, answering prayers for others, but I just don't know that he's ever

answered my prayers. And that's a difficult place to be. You'd be like the college student which by the way, we love college students here at New Life, church, amen.

Alright guys, I look college students like it was like 12 of them clapping.

And they represent all of us. So I want you to know that all of us, they represent us all. Know, you, maybe you're like the college student who was who had a final exam, cane, if you've been to college, you know, final exam, big deal, big deal. And so he was praying before it and he was praying during the exam. And he was getting done with the exam. And about that moment, the professor said to the entire room, hey, listen, the time is getting ready to run up on the exam. And so I only have one other document he just signed. And that would be the document that says simply says that you didn't use any outside help to, to take this quiz or this test this exam today. And so all the students are turning in their, their tests, and they're turning them with these documents, except for this one student and he was still sitting there kind of contemplating, well, I don't know that I can sign that because I did ask for help. I was asking God for help before, I was asking God for help during the test. And so I don't know what to do. So he walks up to the professor. And he just simply tells the professor, Professor, I don't think with a good conscience that can sign this. I was praying, asking for God's help before and during the test the entire time. And the professor said, Well, let me see your Let me see your test. He took the test and he flipped through it. He looked at it a little bit. And then he quickly gave it back to the student it is simply said, Son, I think you can sign the document with a great conscience because it doesn't seem like God came through to answer your press.

You're like, Oh, my heart, it sinks.

It's cruel.

But some of you feel that way. You feel that way. Sometimes you feel like, I don't know. I prayed. And I don't think God's really moving. But I want you to know that Jesus takes prayer serious.

This super serious like in God's word. Prayer is talked about as a power that's used through us. It's not from us to prayer starts from God, by the way. It's God's will. We're praying God's will. It starts in his heart, we find it in our heart, and we pray it according to his will and in His name. And great things happen. And there's a power to prayer that moves mountains, there's a power to prayer. That's the spiritual breakthrough. And today, that's kind of what we want to talk about. So to get there, let's jump in. Let's look at an example. This is an example where the disciples, they tried to exercise prayer for a breakthrough, but it failed on them. And then they got kind of told on and the disciples got thrown under the bus by this guy. It's a it's an interesting passage of scripture found in Matthew chapter 17. I want you to look at it through the lens of prayer with me, okay. So it says at the foot of the mountain, a large crowd was waiting for them. I mean, Jesus and the disciples, a man came in, he knelt before Jesus, and he said, Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and he suffers terribly. He often falls into the water, the fire and into the water. So I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn't heal him. Back the bus up on the disciples, Jesus said, You, you faithless and corrupt people speaking to His disciples, by the way, you faithless and corrupt people, How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you bring the boy here to me? Can you hear the frustration in Jesus's voice a little bit? Then Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy, and it left him. And from that moment, the boy was well, afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, why couldn't we cast out that demon? He goes, you don't have enough faith, Jesus told them, I tell you the truth that if you had faith, even the size of a mustard seed, you can say to the mountain move from here to there, and it would have moved, nothing would be impossible. So here's the disciples with Jesus. And then all of a sudden, can you imagine the look on the disciples face when they see that guy, and that same boy, that had approached them when Jesus wasn't there? And they tried to pray for this boy, who is demon possessing the demons trying to kill him? The demons throwing them into the fire, throwing him into the water, just trying to destroy his life? And can you imagine what the disciples you know, the look on their face when they saw this guy, and this guy comes running up to them and Jesus, and he starts to share with Jesus, how he brought his son to your disciples, these actually these 12 Right over here. I brought into those guys, and they prayed for me couldn't do anything. Can you imagine the disciples are trying to probably distract Jesus? Hey, Jesus, look over there as a bread shop. Right? There's a coffee place. Jesus, look over there, because I guarantee you they were embarrassed by the fact that they tried to. They tried to operate in what they had been given, but it was failing on them. It was collapsing on them and Jesus got frustrated with his disciples, how long do I have to put up with

You guys, how long do I have to deal with you guys? Right? How much longer do I have to do that you guys have such little faith. Now, this is Matthew's account of this moment. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the Gospels. Many times there will be a similar story in a couple of the different gospels. And it now what I want to do is I want to do the same thing. I want to look at the story from Mark's perspective. So we just read it from Matthew's perspective. Okay, now I want to look at it from Mark's perspective, and what happens at the very end of the conversation because I want to draw the bigger picture of what happens. So in Mark chapter nine, verse 28, again, at the end of that story, after the after the guy came, and Jesus cast out the demon, the whole works, says afterwards, when Jesus was alone in the house, with his disciples, they asked Him, Jesus, why couldn't we cast out the evil spirit and Jesus replied, this kind can be cast out only by prayer. Some other manuscripts add the word fasting to that. So in essence, here's the bigger picture. When you put Matthew and Mark together, Jesus is saying to His disciples, you guys, you guys want to you guys want to pray and see breakthrough in your life. You want to pray and see spiritual breakthrough for others, or even in your own life, then it requires great faith. Okay, great faith. And but then it also requires this a prayer, prayer and fasting. There's prayer and fasting, prayer and fasting for what so you can build up some kind of a bank account that then you can cash it in and see God do a breakthrough. No, it's so that you can get closer to God so that you can know the heart of Jesus so that you can actually pray and function in the authority of Christ. And that's what is being said to you and me today. So I just want to simply start out the sermon by just asking a question, Do you have faith in Christ for the breakthrough that you need? Where is your faith? Is your faith fully rooted in Christ for the breakthrough?

Or are there other sources that you're looking for? To find freedom, that God might use other sources for your freedom, he might use other sources for the breakthrough that you're you're looking for, he might lose a doctor, he might use a counselor, or whatever I get that, but where is your faith at is your faith in Christ because, guys, we've heard this scripture many times, that if you have enough faith, the size of a mustard seed, you can say to a mountain be cast into the sea, and it will be cast into the sea. But I just want you to know today, that wasn't some fluffy, nice thing that Jesus said, that was something Jesus said out of frustration to His disciples who didn't have faith.

And he says to them, guys, if you just had faith as small as a mustard seed, you could have said to that demon be gone, and that demon would have been gone in Jesus name. But you didn't have it. And so today, I'm asking you, where's your faith? So I want to use this passage of Scripture. And I just want to like highlight a couple of things, I really want to look at two observations that I see that make prayer powerful for breakthrough. What makes prayer powerful for a spiritual breakthrough. And the first thing that I see is this, that prayer is more than words, it's faith turned into words.

Faith, faith turned into words. That's what prayer is that becomes powerful, that sees a breakthrough. See, because here's the problem. Many of us we pray, but we pray in a suggestive and a questioning kind of an attitude, like God, if you will.

Or God, it would be better if and Jesus is saying, no, no, that's not that's not prayer that takes faith and turns it into words. That's just a questioning heart that doesn't know exactly what my heart is doing. So Jesus is saying, look, here's what faith looks like when you pray, pray like this God, I speak to this sickness, and I commanded to leave in Jesus name.

That's a faith. A faith filled prayer that turns turns this, like hollow words into authoritative words, is when you stand there, and you do that, but the only way you can pray that way, God I speak to the sickness and may be gone in Jesus name. The only way you can do that is if you know what God's will is.

Because we think that God, you know, wants to heal every single illness and every single sickness but throughout history, it's been proven that God doesn't always heal all things the way we think that they should be healed. Because we see an illness we think that that illness on the outside should be healed. But many times God is more focused on the internal than he is the external in our lives. And we have some great examples of this. There are times yes, when Jesus He heals everybody. And there are times when Jesus is in a crowd like we have today in all of our auditoriums. And he only heals one. Like take a look at I'll show you right now.

Matthew chapter eight, verse 16. Here's an example. It says, Then eat. That evening many demon possessed people were brought to Jesus, watch this, he casts out the evil spirits with what kind of a command?

It was simple, right? And he healed. How many of the sick?

Watch this about the authority of Jesus. Right? First and foremost, the disciples were probably yelling and screaming. And who knows, maybe the boy that the demon was throwing the boy into a fire or throwing the boy in the water, it could mean it could easily been to that that demon took that boy's little fist and jacked up one of the disciples faces I have no idea what went down. I just know whatever they were doing didn't work. But when Jesus, Jesus steps into a situation like that, it says that with a simple command, there's no argument, there's no battle, there's no fight with a simple command, He cast out the demons and then watch, He healed all of the sick. Now, that's awesome. And we think like, wow, well, he did that, that time. That must be his MO, right? Must be his normal mode of operation. He's going to do that all the time. But that's not the case. Because there's another moment where there's a crowd of sick people, very sick people, and Jesus only heals one. And it's called, it's called the pool of Bethesda, which sidenote, there's only seven slots still available for the Israel trip. 7k and there will be full, we will have hit our 30 number. I just want you to know we're going to be at the pool of Bethesda. What we're getting ready to read, you're gonna walk through the gate, you're gonna be there, you're going to see it. It's gonna be exciting. So there's only seven spots you might want to get signed up quick. So John, chapter five verses one through six. Check this out. Afterwards, Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holidays. Inside the city near the sheep gate will walk right through it was the pool of Bethesda with five covered porches, watch this. Crowds of sick people, crowds of sick people What kind of sick people blind, lame and paralyzed. They lay on these five porches, right? One of the men lying there have been sick for 38 years, guys. Watch this, when Jesus saw him, and he knew that he had been ill for a long time. What does Jesus do? He asked him a question. Would you like to get well?

Would you like to get Well, long story short, the man, the man kind of gives an excuse. But then he says, Yeah, I want to get well. Jesus says Pick up your mat and walk and the man picks up the mat that he sat there next to that pool for how many years? I have no idea. But he's had this. He's had this inability to walk for 38 years. Casey, I suffered with this for a long time. And then Jesus tells him, Hey, pick up the mat and walk and the guy picks up his mat and he walks away. And the Bible says the basically the Jesus has walked away from that whole thing. The whole crowd of people. It's all these people that were blind, lame, paralyzed, but only one God healed. I mean, look, if we were the disciples there with Jesus, and we saw him do this, we would probably do this. Okay. Well, guys, this is what it means. Let's all find somebody, let's lay hands on him. Let's pray for them. There'll be healed. But Jesus was like, Come on, guys. It's time to go. We did we do. What we're here to do, is do the important thing of praying a prayer that takes the takes prayer and turns it into faith that activates the power for for a for a breakthrough. All comes back to this one simple thing, discerning God's will. Like, that's the most important thing. So in my in my life, as a pastor, I've come to this conclusion. I came to it many, many, many years ago. Right? That I'm going to pray for people like Jesus prayed for the man at the pool, Bethesda. Jesus said, Do you want to get well? One of the things that you'll hear me do from time to time is to simply say this. Do you want to be healed? Yes, I do. Do you believe that Jesus can actually heal you now? Yes. So you see, what you're saying to me is you have faith that Jesus can heal you right now. Yes, Pastor, I do. Okay, well, then I'm gonna pray that prayer with you.

I'm gonna pray that prayer of faith. But man, if you say to me, like, Hey, do you believe you can be healed? Yeah. Do you believe Jesus can heal you right now? Well, you know, I don't know about that. I may got a doctor's appointment tomorrow.

I'm gonna pray for you different. I'm gonna pray that that God will use those doctors in a way that you know, why was you and shows you that the authority is in Christ. But I've also met people that are basically they're beyond that. And they're at a point where they're just simply saying, You know what, I've lived a good life. I'm ready to meet Jesus.

And if a person says I'm ready to meet Jesus, I'm gonna pray for them differently. God would Jesus Bless them made these last days be their best days. God

You use these days that you give them breath? And would you set up divine appointments that they would speak life to others that around them.

Like, we got to know what the what the will the faith is of the person to come alongside them so that we can pray a prayer that's going to bring a breakthrough. If you'd like the guy who I was in Romania a number of years ago on a go trip, and this guy comes in, and we preach, and you know, it's time to pray. And this guy comes up to me,

and I've got an interpreter comes up, he's got a big patch on his left eye. And I said, what happened? And he says, Man, I was at work, and I got a piece of metal in my eye. I've been to the doctor that can't get it out. It's infected. And it's really bad. And it's affecting my vision. It's painful. And I just want it out. I just want it out. And so I said, Can I see it and he pulls up the the eyepatch, and it was bloodshot, red, gooey, nasty kind of a thing. And there was nowhere else to go. And for him. He was just saying, Man, my only place to run right now is the Jesus. So I remember saying to that man through the interpreter, do you believe that Jesus can heal? Yes, I do. Do you believe that Jesus can heal you right now he's like, I need it. I go with let's pray. And I prayed for him. And I put my hand over his eye. I remember when we got done praying, I don't remember we prayed once or we prayed more than once I got this gut. It's been a long time, I got this feeling that we prayed a second time, because I just kind of had this feeling that I remember him kind of like lifting up the patch. And it was still the same way. And I go, let's pray again. And we prayed again, but it doesn't matter. Regardless, that man walked away with no patch needed, and an eye that looked perfectly normal. And that's not because I had anything to give us because He gave him a great gift. Amen.

That's the way God works. It's God's authority that he'll that man, nothing about Jeff Baker, he's not going to remember me or my name. But he's is going to remember that Jesus met him at that church in the middle of the week and healed his eye that day. And I will forever remember that as well. Why? Because God functions with his authority to move through our lives through prayer that brings break through to show his authority, and so that he also gets the glory. And that's the way that God always moves, guys, but he doesn't always heal the way we think that he should heal. There's a woman very famous, she's in her 70s Johnny Erickson Tada, right. 17 years old, she dives into the Chesapeake Bay, and doesn't know how deep the water is and snaps her neck. And at 17 years old, she becomes a quadriplegic. from the neck down, she's paralyzed. She's in a wheelchair. And you would think to yourself, well, how's God ever going to use someone like that? How can he But that woman went on to be a many of you know the name because she's gone on to be a very motivational inspirational speaker speaks at different conferences. She's on the radio as a radio host. I mean, she has been a singer. And by the way, she's written 48 books on the principles of God and His Kingdom. I would say that she's making a really big impact. Right. And one day, one day I heard her talking about, well, yeah, a lot of people come up and they pray for me. A lot of people send me notes. They said, they're praying for my healing. I'm thankful for it. But I just think God's probably doing something bigger. And she's quoted in saying this, that I would rather be in the wheelchair knowing God than on my feet without him.

That's profound. That's a deep statement. To recognize. Can God heal? Yes. Will God heal? I don't know. It's his will. Okay. But can he use her in that situation? Absolutely. So one of the things that we got to take away from stories like this is this that physical healing isn't always the breakthrough.

We look on the outward, God looks on the inward.

Okay. physical healing is what we always want.

God's normally more interested in an internal healing. Gianni, she had another quote and she said this that one problem I have with faith healing is that it tends to be focused only on the physical aspect of healing. But Jesus always backed away when people came to him only to get their physical needs met. My goodness. I mean, he was ready to have you lop off your hand. His real interest was in healing the soul.

Lot. The whole lopping off the hand thing came from this moment where Jesus says to a man, if your hands offending you, it's causing you to sin, be better to cut it off and to enter the kingdom of heaven without it, than to keep it and to cause it to continue to sin and not enter the kingdom of heaven ever.

And so she's right. God is always more interested in the internal breakthrough of our lives. The emotional breakthrough, the mental breakthrough, that the healing of the heart

Aren't the forgiveness that breakthrough can have in our lives? Whatever that is, God's always more interested in that component than anywhere else. So for you and me, we got to have discernment, discernment to know God, what are you doing? Right? What's your will, and I want to line my prayer up, I want my faith that turned into words that line up with your will and church. When that happens. Now we start to see mountains move, we start to see breakthrough take place. Second observation that I want to make.

And help us understand how prayer God uses prayer to be a powerful element. And breakthrough is this that, that prayer for breakthrough, it gets charged up with prayer and fasting. So let me explain what I mean by that. If you

have an electric car these days, then you've got to plug that car in, if you want to go on a journey. So you want to drive it to Omaha today, it better be plugged in, you better be charged up, it better be ready to go or you're not gonna make it all the way to Omaha, you don't get to just pull off anywhere you want and get gasoline. So you got to charge it up. And this is what Jesus was saying to His disciples when he said to them, basically, in frustration, because they weren't able to cast out that demon, and they had the they knew they knew what to do with it. Jesus was telling his disciples that prayer and fasting basically charges you up, it charges you up. There's something about prayer and fasting to get you closer to God's heart that charges you up, show that when the moment comes, whether it's in your life, or it's you praying for others, you are charged up, ready to rock and roll to pray a prayer of faith that actually sees breakthrough happen. There's something about private prayer and fasting. That's why I think Jesus got so frustrated. I think Jesus got frustrated because what we were reading about happened in Matthew chapter 17. But if you remember certain things about the Bible, Matthew chapter 10.

few chapters before this chronologically timewise, before what took place, where they couldn't cast out the demon out of the out of the man's son. In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus sent them out to buy to watch this, the Bible says he gave them the authority to heal the sick and cast out demons. And they went seven chapters earlier, to buy to into these communities that they had never been to before. And they walk in, they preach the gospel, they pray for people, the sick are healed, and many of them actually cast out demons. Now, seven chapters later, we're finding out that, hey, I brought my son to your disciples just a little while ago, and they couldn't cast out the demon. And I was just wondering, Jesus, can you help me, and that's why Jesus got so frustrated at them. It's as if the disciples forgotten where the authority comes from. It's as if the disciples got comfortable, and they stopped praying outside of their time with Jesus, they stopped seeking the father, they stopped fasting, it was as if they forgot where the authority comes from. It's almost like they got cocky and confident.

And I bet you that if you were there, the day when they tried to pray for their son, that there was nothing mentioned in Jesus name.

I got this gut feeling that they forgot about the authority that comes in their prayer that only comes through Christ, and that it comes in Jesus name. And that's why Jesus gets so frustrated at them because he's like, Guys, don't you get it? Don't you get it right prayer for breakthrough comes as you get closer to me through your private prayer, prayer for breakthrough comes as you get closer to me through fasting.

And that that kind of prayer and fasting is like persistence. It's like that thing that you do on Monday and Tuesday, just getting close to God. It's a discipline that we we put into action on Wednesday and Thursday, just getting close to God so that we're ready. When God says, now's the time, I'm going to use you. Now's the time, pray for your friend. Now's the time. Now's the time. You're in need of spiritual breakthrough. Now's the time but we guys, we don't get charged up. And then we wonder why we don't see breakthrough. You're going through a bank account, trying to cash a check in a big account that has no money.

There's nothing there.

There's something about the spiritual discipline of getting close to God through prayer and fasting that God uses in our lives.

And it's that persistence, persistence, so we can say it this way. persistent prayer equals Prout power for breakthrough.

And somewhere along the way, the disciples thought to themselves well, we've seen Jesus, you know, pray and see breakthrough for people and we've actually done it we did it, you know, seven chapters ago.

So therefore, we should be able to do it again. And Jesus is going, No, no, here's what happened. Your spiritual battery got drained, and you got more dependent on yourself and on the history than you did on the current. And for some of us in this room, we've experienced prayer through break through in our past, but we're not experiencing it now. And you're wondering if God abandoned you? And I'm gonna say this? No, it's probably because you've walked away from the basics. We've walked away from the basics. We don't control God. No, that's, that's absolutely true. We do not control him. We do not tell God what he should do. But I know this, that through prayer and fasting, our heart gets closer to God. And we kind of start getting this sense of what God wants to do.

And that's where God wants us to be, he wants us to be in that place where we've got this persistence in prayer with God, I just want to know you, God, I just want to be obedient to you, God, I just want to be in alignment with you. And when we have that attitude, watch out because you're getting your life set up to be to see a breakthrough because of the persistence. Let me show you an example of what Jesus was talking about. When he's trying to drive home. This idea of persistence and prayer and fasting is found in Luke chapter 15. Jesus's teaching about prayer still, and it gives us the disciples the story. Here's how it goes, because then Jesus, excuse me, then teaching them more about prayer. Alright, Jesus used this story, says, suppose suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, waiting to borrow three loaves of bread, which, by the way, don't come by my house at midnight, looking for three loaves of bread. Can you do that to me? I'm gonna do it to you. All right.

So but suppose just suppose, suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread? Can you imagine if I was the mother of disciples, I'm starting to laugh and like Jesus gonna tell joke. No, he's serious, three loaves of bread. And you say to him, a friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat. And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are in bed. I can't help you. But listen to what Jesus says. But I tell you this, though, he won't do it for friendship sake. If you keep knocking at midnight long enough, he will get up and He will give you whatever you need, because You're shameless persistence.

I love it. And he's so true. Is that or someone's calling the cops on you? Right? It's one of the two, one of the two is gonna go down. So what did Jesus say right after that. And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you asked for, keep on seeking and you will find keep on knocking, and the door will be open to you. For everyone who asks receives. Everyone who seeks finds, and everyone who knocks the door will be open to them. That's Jesus teaching on prayer. What's he What's he really trying to drive home?

Be persistent in our prayer. Keep asking, seeking and knocking. Keep doing that through our private prayer. Because as we do that, we will see the spiritual breakthrough that God has for our life at just the right time, in just the right way. But it takes persistence in our prayer. So that means somebody needs to hear today that you might be you might be one ask, you might be one Seek and you might be one knock away from the freedom and the breakthrough that you've been looking for. I'm here today to tell you this that God loves persistent prayer. God loves a dependency prayer like God, I am dependent on you. If you don't move, nothing good is gonna happen. God loves. He loves faith that's turned into words. That's what God loves. God loves sacrificial prayer. And God loves fasting. So guys, keep on being persistent. Just keep being persistent. Because breakthrough for healing, breakthrough for a deliverance, breakthrough for addiction, breakthrough in a marriage breakthrough with that, that relationship with a family breakthrough in your job breakthrough is just one ask one seek one knock away. We just got to be persistent in our personal prayer life. So I want you didn't know asking, seeking and knocking.

Here's what it equals persistent prayer for spiritual breakthrough. And we see that throughout the Bible.

Throughout the Bible, we're getting ready to sing the song. Lord, I ask, I seek and I pray. And as we sing that song, I want faith to arise in you. Yes, that's right. The authority for spiritual breakthrough comes from Christ. So what does my heart have to do? My heart has to get lined up with his heart so that my prayer is his prayer. Where does the authority for that prayer come from? It comes from my private time. It comes from this moment right now of gathering together seeking Jesus just to know Him, and to let his authority reign and rule in our heart. And as we do that, we're positioning ourselves for the greatest spiritual breakthrough that maybe you've ever seen in all of your life. That's what the woman that had an issue of bleeding. She had it for many, many years in the Bible. She tried the doctors, there was no hope. And then one day she heard Jesus was walking close by and so she gets out of her house and she presses through the crowd, and she pushes people away.

Right?

Just to touch Jesus, persistent, she touches Jesus and she sealed

are the friends that had their buddy who couldn't walk and they bring him to Jesus, but the house is full. And so what do they do, they get up on the roof, and they're gonna drop Jesus, they're gonna make a hole in the roof. You know, what I'm convinced of about those, those three or four guys that brought their friend of Jesus that made a hole in some stranger's roof, is I'm convinced of this. They don't own homes.

Because if they were homeowners, they would have known how expensive that was the fix. So these are probably some young adults that have yet to buy their first home, okay? Because after that, they're probably like, Man, I

should probably give that guy some money. So they've made a hole in this guy's roof and they drop their friend through, and Jesus prays for him, he's healed, and he walks out of that front door of the house. That's persistence. That's what God's looking for in our lives. Will we be persistent? And will we just keep pressing in to Jesus getting closer and closer to him believing that there is a breakthrough that comes as I get close to him and I pray HIS WILL over my life and over the lives of others? In Jesus name. It's always in Jesus name. Be healed in Jesus name. Be free in Jesus name. You know, right in Jesus name, I let go of the forgiveness in Jesus name. May my marriage be healed in Jesus name, right? May that relationship with that co worker be healed in Jesus name. It's in Jesus name. I surrender to you. It's in Jesus name. I commit my life to you. It's in Jesus name. Guys. Never forget where the authority that activates your prayer comes from it always comes from Him, because it's always for His glory. Amen. Aren't you stand with me? And let's pray.

So, Lord, today we recognize that our prayer is more than just words. It's faith turned into words. And the Lord today we stand here as a group of people, a crowd in need a breakthrough. There's people in this room that are desperate for a breakthrough right now. Lord, would You increase their faith? Would you give them the faith the Lord when they sent your spirit asking them? Do you want to get well? Do you want to be healed? Do you want to be set free? The Lord, their immediate response would be to you Jesus? Yes.

Yes. The Lord, our response to you today would be I'm desperate for you to move in my life God that I pray that today, I pray you will increase faith to match your will.

That Lord today through worship, through prayer, through fasting, that we will get closer and closer to you. So the Lord our our mouths, don't just pray hollow words, but that our mouths would literally fray, the will of the Father. And as we pray the will of the Father than Lord, yes, faith, the size of a mustard seed can speak to a mountain. It can speak to an issue and we can see spiritual breakthrough happen in our lives, and in the lives of those that we love deeply. Thank you for that. That authority that only comes from you, Jesus, that we never forget. That is the name of Jesus that moves mountains, and it's the name of Jesus. That spiritual breakthrough happens in prayer. And everybody said,
Amen.

BREAKTHROUGH, Week 3: "Prayer"

Small Group Guide

Opener: "Prayer Partner Introduction"

- Start the session with a simple ice breaker to help everyone connect and learn more about each other through prayer.
 - Instruct participants to form a circle in the meeting space.
 - Explain that you'll pair them up to become prayer partners for a brief introductory activity.
 - Ask each person to turn to the person on their left (or right) and introduce themselves. They should share their name and one thing they'd like prayer for or are thankful for in their life. It can be something as simple as their day or something more personal, depending on their comfort level.
 - After both participants have shared and exchanged contact information (if desired), ask them to pray together right there in the circle. The prayer can be short and focused on the request or thanksgiving shared earlier.
 - After the first round of introductions and prayers, have participants rotate to a new partner by taking a step to their left (or right), creating new pairs.
 - Repeat the process for a few rounds, allowing everyone to connect with multiple prayer partners.
 - You can end the ice breaker by discussing as a group how it felt to connect with others through prayer and what they appreciated about the activity.
 - Conclude with a collective prayer, thanking God for the opportunity to connect through prayer and asking for His blessings on the small group meeting.

Discussion Starters:

1. Prayer Perspectives

- Share your personal views on prayer. What do you believe prayer is primarily for, and how do you approach it in your daily life?

2. Help!

- Discuss the humorous college student anecdote in the sermon about prayer during an exam. Have you ever experienced a situation where you prayed for help, and it seemed like God didn't answer? How did you react?

3. The Power of Persistent Prayer

- Reflect on the idea that persistent prayer leads to spiritual breakthrough. Share personal stories of prayers that were answered after persistent seeking, asking, and knocking. How did these experiences impact your faith?

4. Hope in Prayer

- Explore the message of hope in prayer, even when we may not see immediate results. How can we maintain hope in our prayers, especially during challenging times? Share moments when you've witnessed the power of persistent prayer.

Additional Bible Passage for Discussion:

Luke 18:1-8 (NIV)

- Read and discuss the parable of the persistent widow and the unjust judge. How does this parable illustrate the importance of persistent prayer?

Matthew 7:7-11 (NIV)

- Read and discuss Jesus' teaching on asking, seeking, and knocking. What does this passage teach us about God's willingness to respond to our prayers?

5. Applying What You've Learned

- How can you practically apply the concept of persistent prayer for spiritual breakthrough in your daily life? What changes or adjustments can you make to your prayer habits or attitudes?

Closing Prayer:

- Invite someone to lead the group in a closing prayer. Encourage participants to pray for their newfound prayer partners and any prayer requests from the group.

Action Steps:

- Encourage group members to set specific goals for their prayer life this week, whether it's dedicating time for prayer, seeking a prayer partner, or praying for someone in need of a breakthrough. Share your progress during the next small group meeting.