

Last Sunday, we began our new series based on the movie "Breakthrough." I'm believing for a great breakthrough in our lives.

Some of you are facing challenging circumstances. It might be your job, your marriage, your family, your friends, or your health.

Maybe your doctors have said the words, "There is nothing else we can do."

I want to assure you we serve a God who can still breakthrough. We serve a God who still performs miracles. We serve a God who loves you greatly and knows where you are and what you are walking through.

For others here, life is going pretty well. You have money in the bank, a nice house, a good family, and a good job.

Thank God everything is going good for you. But it's amazing how fast that can change. One phone call can turn your world upside down. I have heard it said we are all either in the middle of a crisis, walking into a crisis, or coming out of a crisis. So, what happens when crisis strikes?

When you look at many of the "problems" we face in life today, they really aren't problems. If you can solve a problem on your own, or with money, it's not really a problem.

But what happens when you run into a problem you can't solve? Or a situation the money in your bank account can't fix? When a doctor tells you, "There is nothing else we can do"? No amount of money can fix that.

Those are the times we must position ourselves for a miracle. Those are times we need a "breakthrough" God to do what only He can do. Those are not the times to allow the impossibilities you face to take you down. Those are the times we must choose to believe big and pray big. We can't allow fear to overwhelm us or cause us to give up. The bigger the impossibility, the more we must firmly position ourselves for a miracle.

I love what Dale Carnegie has stated: He has said, "you can conquer all most any fear if you will only make up your mind to do so. For remember, fear doesn't exist anywhere except in the mind.

We can overcome every circumstance and every impossibility that we are facing, no matter what it is. Why? Because Jesus overcame death on the cross.

It's why we can experience a breakthrough in our lives. We believe God raises dead things to life, even today! We can stand on the promise in Romans 8.

Romans 8:11 (NIV) - 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Our world can turn upside down in an instant. Without warning, we can be rocked to our core and find ourselves in the midst of a storm.

Storms are a great example of what life can feel like in that moment. These impossible situations can feel like we're out on a boat in the middle of the ocean when, suddenly, a storm hits. We're tossed and turned by a storm that came out of nowhere. We weren't expecting it. We weren't prepared. How do we regain our footing to position ourselves for a miracle?

It reminds me of a story in the Bible when the disciples faced a storm. In Mark 4, Jesus tells His disciples He wants to cross the lake with them. As they make their way to the other side, a storm comes up.

This storm, however, is no surprise because this "lake" is the Sea of Galilee, which is notorious for ferocious, unpredictable storms. It's located about six hundred feet below sea level and is virtually surrounded by mountains. This setting allows the lake to be like a giant funnel, drawing cold air down from those mountains and blasting it onto the sea. The frigid air hitting the water can stir up instant and violent storms. In fact, it is typical for waves during a storm to reach 20 feet high.

The storm was serious. Their boat could capsize, and they could die.

Jesus's friends, the disciples, panicked when the storm hit. What is interesting is that several of them were experienced sailors. They had been through all kinds of storms, but apparently this one went beyond their ability. They were desperate.

Mark 4:35–41 (NIV) - 35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" 39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" His one thing we can gain looking at this Scripture. It doesn't matter how long you have been on this journey with the Lord. Whether it's been 20 minutes or 20 years there are times when the impossibilities and storms in life can shake you and bring a paralyzing fear. And in those desperate time it stirs us to take desperate measures.

As the storm rages, the disciples allow fear to take over instead of overcoming fear and overcoming the storm. They forgot Jesus was in the boat with them. They are losing it because of the storm, while in the boat with them rests the ruler of the storms. Finally, they turn to Jesus and He is sleeping. How could Jesus be fast asleep at a time like this? The disciples seem confused that Jesus is sleeping. Jesus's disciples, even today, can be confused when storms hit. They pray and nothing happens. It seems as if Jesus is sleeping.

When we believe God is not paying attention, that He might even be sleeping when He is supposed to be on watch, we become more desperate. That is not a feeling we like to have.

1 Kings 18:25–29 (NIV): Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." 26 So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made. 27 At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." 28 So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. 29 Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

The story ends well. It's Elijah's turn and after dowsing the altar a few times with water the Lord answers his prayer and consumes the sacrifice.

May I propose to you the feeling of desperation could actually be a good thing?

Pastor, how is being desperate a good thing? When you're desperate for God you will pursue Him with everything. When you're truly desperate for a breakthrough you will swim through shark-infested waters if that's what it takes.

The problem is that too often we are not desperate. We need to live desperate.

When we do, we are positioning ourselves for a miracle.

I love the story in Luke 18 it's a wonderful story about desperation.

For see in desperation it will get you hungry for results.

Luke 18:1–8 (NIV): Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4 "For some time he refused. But

finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!' " 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Luke 18:1–8 (TPT): One day Jesus taught the apostles to keep praying and never stop or lose hope. He shared with them this illustration: 2 "In a certain town there was a civil judge, a thick-skinned and godless man who had no fear of others' opinions. 3 And there was a poor widow in that town who kept pleading with the judge, 'Grant me justice and protect me against my oppressor!' 4–5 "He ignored her pleas for quite some time, but she kept asking. Eventually he said to himself, 'This widow keeps annoying me, demanding her rights, and I'm tired of listening to her. Even though I'm not a religious man and don't care about the opinions of others, I'll just get her off my back by answering her claims for justice and I'll rule in her favor. Then she'll leave me alone.' " 6 The Lord continued, "Did you hear what the ungodly judge said—that he would answer her persistent request? 7 Don't you know that God, the true judge, will grant justice to all of his chosen ones who cry out to him night and day? He will pour out his Spirit upon them. He will not delay to answer you and give you what you ask for. 8 God will give swift justice to those who don't give up. So be ever praying, ever expecting, just like the widow was with the judge. Yet when the Son of Man comes back, will he find this kind of persistent faithfulness in his people?"

Last week, I told you the story of John Smith and showed you the clip from the new movie "Breakthrough". John had fallen through the ice and been dead for over an hour when his mom was called in for time of death.

All of a sudden, she was facing the worst kind of storm a parent can face — the death of her son. She walked into the room and prayed, "Holy Spirit, I need you now. Bring my son back to life." At that moment, after an hour of no pulse and no oxygen, John had a pulse.

The storm wasn't over yet. It had only just begun.

They airlifted John to a children's hospital in St. Louis, where the doctor, an area expert on hypothermia and drowning, met Brian and Joyce. They were facing an incredible impossibility. The doctor that attended John would later spend two years looking around the world for another person who had survived what John had experienced.

Here is the clip in the movie where Brian and Joyce receive the news that John was brain dead and wouldn't survive the night.

(Show sermon clip #2)

I love Joyce's response when she faced one of the biggest storms of her life. The reality of just how big an impossibility they were actually facing hit her. She thought for just a moment. You can



see the battle between being overcome by the impossibility or overcoming the impossibility. In that moment, she chose to overcome the impossibility by choosing faith over fear. This is evident when she said, "Doctor, I hear you're the best at what you do. World renowned, in fact. Is that true?" The doctor answered yes, and Joyce responded back with, "Then you do what you can do, and we will let God do the rest."

Let's get back to the disciples.

How did it end on the Sea of Galilee? Jesus was sleeping through the storm. How did it play out? Mark 4 tells us the rest of the story.

Let's look once more.

Mark 4:38–41 (NIV) - 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" 39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

It sounds like this wasn't the first time the disciples had a lack of faith. They had struggled with this before. They weren't only afraid, they were terrified. I'm thankful that, even in our moments

of lacking faith, Jesus still shows up to help us and bring a breakthrough. I'm thankful God's ability to break through our situations is completely based upon Him and who He is and doesn't rely upon us and what we do.

So, how do we overcome our impossibilities and not let them overcome us? How do survive when storms come?

Storms in this life are going to come. The Bible tells us that. We need to be ready for them and not let them overtake us. Remember, Jesus is riding in your boat. He will help you whenever you need His help. All you have to do is call on His name!

Here are three points that I believe will help you overcome impossible situations and circumstances in your life:

### **Point #1-Decide what your go-to is.**

The storm on the Sea of Galilee rages. It appears as though the disciples immediately start trying to save themselves. They think, 'We have this,' but it quickly becomes obvious they don't.

What you do when a storm comes says a lot about you. What's your go-to position? Is it fear, worry, anxiety? What's your first response? What's your immediate response? Do you try to fix it yourself? How long does it take you to admit you don't have this?

The disciples realized they were in trouble, and they panicked.

They forgot that Jesus had this all covered. All they had to do was go to Him. It took them a while to figure that out. He wasn't their first go-to.

Many of us go to everything else first. The doctor and not the Great Physician. The bank account, our friends instead of Holy Spirit. The list can go on and on.

The disciples had forgotten the promise God made to them a long time ago. It's a promise you need to be aware of if you aren't. David wrote it when he was facing impossibility. It's a promise that is still true today. It can be found in Psalms 34. . .

Psalm 34:17–18 (NIV) - 17 The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. 18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

That's a promise you can hold onto.

God is close to the brokenhearted. He rescues us when we cry out to Him for help. The issue is that too often we ignore our brokenness and refuse to ask for help. We allow our situation and

impossibilities to overcome us, instead of overcoming our impossibilities.

My prayer is that your first response will be to position your heart and mind to receive a breakthrough, and that you will allow Him to exchange fear for courage.

How you respond may very well dictate the outcome of that storm in your life. This is where believing big and praying big comes in.

When people are facing impossible situations in their life, I have heard them say, "I have done everything there is to do. I guess all I have left to do is pray." I want to encourage you.... pray first! Let that be your first response. It will change your situation.

## **Point #2 – Realize it very well may be a spiritual battle.**

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV) - 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

We have to remember that we face an enemy named Satan. The Bible tells us he came to rob, kill, and destroy us. He is the one that turns our life upside down with lies, sickness, death, and situations that seem impossible.

You have an enemy and it's not a person. We are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies. Your enemy is not the person sitting right in front of you. Look past that and see into the spiritual realm to see your real enemy. Your enemy is not your mean boss, ex-spouse, parent, or the guy who cut you off in traffic, the negative doctor, or the overbearing nurse.

Your enemy is Satan. Satan hates God and everything God loves. And God loves you.

Our enemy wants to prevent anything good from happening in our life, and he wants to make sure you don't believe you are everything a God says you are.

Paul tells us to be aware of his schemes.

What are his schemes?

- Satan will try to blind you. He'll try to keep you from seeing, accepting, or remembering God's truth.
- He will seek to steal from you. His purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy.
- He will seek to stop you. Paul wrote, "We wanted very much to come to you...but Satan prevented us" (1 Thessalonians 2:18)

- He will seek to destroy you. "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." Don't be that someone. He wants to destroy friendships, marriages, kids, health, finances, and most of all, our relationship with God. He uses anything he can to destroy us.

The battle we are engaged in is spiritual, and it is being waged in the unseen world. There are examples of this in the Bible:

Daniel prayed but received no answer. Finally, an angel arrives with the answer and an explanation. The reason for the delay was a spiritual battle raging in the heavens. The angel was blocked from reaching Daniel.

Have you ever considered that the answers to your prayers are being influenced by spiritual forces warring against each other?

When Elisha and his servant faced Aram's army, the servant was afraid. But Elisha prayed that his eyes would be opened, and he was able to see that they were surrounded and supported by a great spiritual army.

Do you realize you are not fighting alone? That's good news!

We sing that song it may look like I'm surrounded but I'm surrounded by you. That's what that song is talking about. Are

you focusing on the problem or on the one that can answer the problem?

We see our issues as physical issues, and we treat the battle as a physical battle, but our problems are not really physical in nature.

That's why we have to fight this battle in the spiritual realm with the spiritual weapons God has given and Scripture talks about. So, how do we battle? It is only through our connection with God that we can do battle with the forces of darkness.

2 Corinthians 10:3–4 (NIV) - 3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

We can't fight this battle with our own power; we need God's power. The Bible encourages us to "be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power."

God will give us the power to fight, and He loves us so much He has equipped us with spiritual armor for the battle. The armor is found in Ephesians 6.

Ephesians 6:10–17 (NIV): Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the

authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

This armor needs to be put on at the beginning of every day.

Your spiritual enemy is scheming against you. He's not concerned with your past, but he's very concerned about your future. He is doing his best to make sure you don't make it. He knows the kind of impact your life can make when you understand whose you are. When you begin to live to the full potential of God's calling on your life.

He has a strategy he uses against you every day to keep you from God and the abundant life God has for you. To stand against this enemy, you need to put on your spiritual armor.

Make putting on your spiritual armor a thing you do first thing in the morning as you start your day.



And here's the truth you have an enemy— but God is in you and is more powerful!

1 John 4:4 (NIV) - 4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

### **Point #3 – Be an overcomer despite the outcome.**

We can't worry about the outcome of the situations we are facing. That's God's job.

If we are worrying, we aren't trusting God.

It's easy to overcome an impossibility when it appears God is doing exactly what we want Him to do and answering our prayers exactly the way we want Him to answer.

The problem with that however, is that at the first sign God's not answering our prayers the way we want; we start to be overcome by our impossibilities.

Our job is to pray, believe God and His promises, and trust Him with the outcome. To position ourselves for a miracle we have to align our will with God's will. That means; however things turn out, we are going to trust Him. We will not be moved.

I love what Isaiah wrote:

Isaiah 43:26 (NIV): Review the past for me, let us argue the matter together; state the case for your innocence.

(Talk about this God you remember your word says. . .)

Even if God doesn't answer our prayers the way we want. We must overcome impossibilities and trust God for the outcome.

Today, maybe you are completely overwhelmed by the impossibilities you are facing. Maybe you are in the middle of the storm, and you are panicking. Maybe you are even afraid you're going to drown.

I want to remind you that Jesus is in your boat. You are not alone. It's time to believe big and pray big. It's time to overcome the impossibility you are facing. God wants to help you!

If you have never given your life to Him, I want to encourage you. Today is the day to give your life to the Lord, and it's so easy. The Bible tells us to confess with our mouth and believe in our heart and we will be saved.

Listen I'm not talking about just saying a sinner's prayer. But you need to start with confessing that He is Lord, that you can't do this on your own. Believe that he died and rose again so that we can find life to its fullest.