

**Joke:** A husband and wife were driving through Louisiana. As they approached Natchitoches, they started arguing about the pronunciation of the town. They argued back and forth, then they stopped for lunch. At the counter, the husband leans in and asked the waitress, “before we order, could you please settle an argument for us. Would you please pronounce where we are very slowly? She leaned over the counter and said, “Burr-gerrr Kiiing.”

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Today, we finishing our series based on the movie Breakthrough, before I get started I want to ask you a question. Now think about it before you answer and answer it to yourself not out loud. And how you answer this question can really determine if you are positioning yourself for a breakthrough.

Here’s the question, you ready? What kind of people do you allow into your life?

Do you allow faith-filled believing people to surround you? People that speak life over you? Friends that will carry you to Jesus?

Or, do you surround yourself with people who speak death, who gossip, who backbite? Who always love to share the next juicy nugget with you? Who, in the moment of crisis, tear down your faith and be the realist, always giving you the most negative prognosis?

Or, maybe you don’t have any close friends, which is typical of the world we are living in today. We live in such a connected world, but people are more disconnected and lonelier than ever before.

Think about it our young people are more concerned about how many followers they have on social media then the neighbor suffering down the street. We tweet our morning routine so the world can know what is happening with us even if its just a daily stop by Starbucks. It seems every message has hashtag ———.

But here's the thing. When we are in crisis, doubts have a tendency to creep in. Our hearts can wander. All by ourselves is a dangerous place to be. We need faith-filled friends who will lift us up. We need to surround ourselves with faith-filled friends and we need to be faith-filled friends for others. We need each other to see the "Breakthrough." We can't do this life on our own.

We have been watching movie clips during this series from the movie "Breakthrough." We have seen the importance of a praying, faith-filled community in the miracle of John Smith. From the moment John fell through the ice, the Smith family was surrounded by friends, family, a church family, a school family, and pastors that walked alongside them.

Here is a clip from the movie where, earlier in the day, Joyce had coded because of a diabetic coma. The doctor gave her strict orders to rest. At the end of the rest time, Pastor Jason came in to check on her. Let's watch it together.

(Play clip 4)

Joyce realized she couldn't control the situation. At that moment, she needed a faith-filled friend to encourage her and walk beside her. It was a game-changing point in the story.

At times, in the middle of impossibilities or challenges, we “help” God by trying to control the outcome. The last thing we want to do is rest. But what if resting in Him and trusting He has everything under control is exactly what He wants you to do?

Some of you here today are worn out. You have been trying to fix things on your own. You have run yourself ragged trying to “help God” and nothing is working. The circumstances seem to be going from bad to worse. The impossibilities you are facing seem to be getting bigger. The more you try to fix things for God, the worse things get.

You lay your problem down, but then become restless and so you go back to it and pick it back up. Hoping this time you will know how to fix it.

What if God is saying “rest”? Maybe you are not supposed to be doing anything except trusting God and allowing Him to work in your situations.

I want to take you to another miracle found in Scripture where we see this so well illustrated.

Jesus was able to perform a miracle because of some faith-filled friends. In Luke 5, we read about a man who was paralyzed. He had lived his life laying on this mat. Being paralyzed meant this man could do nothing for himself. He had to depend on someone else for everything. This man was completely dependent on others.

He was also hopeless because, at that time, there was nothing that could be done for him — no surgeries or physical therapy. He would lie on his mat forever. That was his fate. Could you imagine facing life like that? That was his life.

As bad as it was for him physically, there were other devastating issues, too.

In the times of Jesus, people with physical defects were viewed as dispensable or worse. Historians believe the Greeks usually disposed of newborns if they had physical defects. In fact, the Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote, “Let there be a law that no deformed child shall be raised to adulthood.” The Romans did just that. In the fifth century, they had a statute that read, “Quickly kill a deformed child.”

There were also spiritual issues for this man. In that day, people believed physical suffering was brought on by sin. Suffering was a punishment from God.

So, this man was thought of as different, less than, useless, and cursed by God. Yet, somehow, he was surrounded by an amazing group of friends. These friends loved this man. They wanted more than anything for their paralyzed buddy to be healed.

They had heard about Jesus and His power and realized to position their friend for a miracle, he needed to be close to Jesus. Whatever it took. Whatever kind of sacrifice they would have to make, they were willing to do it. Those are the kind of friends I want in my life!

They informed their friend that the next day they would pick him up and take him to Jesus. (We don't know if he shared their faith in Jesus, but either way, he had no choice but to go. Because when his friends picked him up, they really picked him up.)

Imagine the journey. They carried their friend all the way to Jesus. Think about the commitment these friends must have had.

The man and his friends arrived at the house where Jesus was, only to find it completely packed with people who also wanted to get close to Jesus. There was no way inside. In fact, a crowd of people surrounded the house, hoping for a glimpse of Jesus or to hear what He was saying. Not only could they not get in the house, they couldn't even get close.

They carried their friend all this distance and now they couldn't even get near Jesus.

No one would've blamed them for giving up. The journey there was difficult enough. Despite their good intentions, things were not turning out the way they had hoped.

This group of friends, however, were determined to help their buddy get to Jesus.

They were desperate for their friend. Their buddy needed healing. They were not going to let him live another day in that crippled condition. They had heard the stories, maybe been a witness to a few of the miracles and their buddy needed a miracle, they believed Jesus could do it, and they were going to find a way.

They put their heads together and came up with a plan.

Their plan was crazy. They were going to take their friend up on the roof of the house, tear the roof open, drop him in front of Jesus.

They weren't concerned about whose house it was. What people thought. They just wanted their friend close to Jesus, healed and desperate times calls for desperate measures.

Faith-filled friends will do things that seem crazy in the natural, but they won't give up until God shows up!

I wish I could have witnessed them moving their paralyzed friend to the roof. They would have had to go to the back of the house and bring him up a tight stairwell to get access to the roof. These guys were committed and not giving up.

They got the man on the roof and started tearing it apart. Could you imagine being inside the house as the flakes from the ceiling started to fall? You look up and see a crack, and emerging through that crack, lots of fingers.

As everyone stared, bewildered, the hole grew larger and finally four smiling faces appeared.

Once the hole was big enough, they "lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith,

Look what He said:

Luke 5:19–20 (NIV) - <sup>19</sup>When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. <sup>20</sup>When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

I love that they came hoping for a physical healing, but Jesus addressed the more important issue the man’s spiritual condition. Isn’t it just like God to give us what we need, not just what we ask for? Jesus forgave the man’s sins.

But Jesus wasn’t done yet. A moment later:

Luke 5:24–26 (NIV) - <sup>24</sup>But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”

<sup>25</sup>Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. <sup>26</sup>Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.”

Let’s look at verse 20 once more:

Luke 5:20 (NIV) - <sup>20</sup>When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

I love that, “when Jesus saw their faith.” Whose faith did He see? Not the paralyzed man’s faith. Their faith. It was the faith of the friends that got the man to Jesus. It was the faith of the friends that positioned the man for the miracle he needed. If he had not surrounded himself with the right friends, he would have never gotten to Jesus, never gotten healed physically, and never heard Jesus tell him his sins were forgiven. Without his friends, this miracle never would have happened.

Think about this, consider Job. He had three friends come visit him in his time of suffering. They were Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar.

What did they say:

- Eliphaz states that Job was suffering because he must have done something wrong

Job 22:5 (NIV) - <sup>5</sup>Is not your wickedness great? Are not your sins endless?

- Bildad well sort of on the same page as Eliphaz if you repent God will restore everything. Again, Job you must have done something wrong.
- Now it’s Zophar’s turn and he goes on to imply that Job deserves even worse than what he was getting.

Job 11:5–6 (NIV) - <sup>5</sup>Oh, how I wish that God would speak, that he would open his lips against you <sup>6</sup>and disclose to you the secrets



of wisdom, for true wisdom has two sides. Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin.

That last line in the English Standard Version says it this way: “Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves”

Harsh. I want friends like that. . .not

Listen I want friends who speak truth, but a little loving kindness in the process would be great.

Now Job was not perfect in his response to everything, but after his so-called friends gave their opinions and Job his rebuttal, God intervened on Job’s behalf.

Job 42:7 (NIV) - <sup>7</sup> After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.

Hear this church, when you have an incorrect view of God and His character it can cause you to say things that just isn’t His nature. God came to the Eliphaz and says, I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me.

Now let’s get back to our story. . .

I want to share with you four things that faith-filled, believing-big, praying-big friends do that position you for a breakthrough:

**Point #1-They Carry you to Jesus.**

You need friends in your life who will carry you to Jesus.

This man's friends were not content leaving him paralyzed and hopeless. They were willing to do whatever it took for this man to find a breakthrough.

What they committed to do wasn't easy, but they were not okay with the status quo. They did not accept the fact this man was paralyzed and forever would be.

They pushed this man out of his comfort zone. We need faith-filled friends who will surround us and push us out of our comfort zones.

We need friends who won't just accept that our situation has always been that way and will always be that way. We need friends who love us enough to carry us to Jesus when we can't carry ourselves.

Listen your intercession on behalf of others is powerful. They might not have faith, but God will honor yours. Your prayers for your friends or family can shift their hearts.

This man was literally unable to position himself to receive a breakthrough. He needed his friends help. It would have never happened without these men that loved him.

Because of the faith of his friends, he was healed.

We also have to be willing to allow people to carry us to Jesus.

One of the issues we have is that we are DIY-ers (do it yourselfers). We don't like to ask for help. Like Joyce we don't like to give up control and rely on others. What if that's what's keeping you from your breakthrough?

We need to be willing to allow our friends to carry us to Jesus. Our relationships and who we spend time around is so important.

Proverbs 27:17 (NIV): As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Proverbs 14:7 (NIV): Stay away from a fool, for you will not find knowledge on their lips.

Proverbs 13:20 (NIV): Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV): Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

When we need help, when we need to share our burdens, when we need people to pray, there is something inside of us that thinks, “But I don’t want to ask. I don’t want to impose. I don’t want to inconvenience anyone.” I understand that. I sometimes feel like that, too. But sometimes. . .

Remember that 1967 song from the Beatles. I get by with a little help from my friends. I don’t agree with all the lyrics of that song, but you get the picture. We need each other. They needed a lot of help they even had a song that said, “help I need somebody. . .”

## **Point #2 – Speak life.**

You know you have the right kind of friends by what comes out of their mouths, especially when you are seeking a miracle.

Do they share God’s wisdom or their own opinions? Do they have a faith-fueled, God-centered positivity? Or do they speak negative thoughts that intensify your doubts?

Proverbs 18:21 (NIV) - <sup>21</sup> The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

We need friends who are going to speak life over us.

Our tongue has the power of life and death. We can speak life over our friends, or we can speak death. Our friends can speak life over us or death.

We live in a culture where we have forgotten this. People throw around words like they have no power and don't matter. Every word we speak matters.

We need friends who will speak the truths and promises of God over our lives and situations.

Maybe you've heard people say, "I'm just the realist." We don't need someone who only sees the physical side of our situations. We need a group of friends who will speak spiritual truths over our lives. Who will stand with us and speak "breakthrough" truth over what we are walking through?

### **Point #3 – Exhibit crazy faith.**

We need friends who will exhibit crazy faith. Crazy faith causes people to do crazy things.

What seems crazy to us, sometimes, is exactly what moves the hand of God and positions us for breakthrough. Carrying a paralyzed man through the city, getting him on top of a roof, breaking open a roof, and hoisting him down. That's pretty crazy. Thank God for these crazy faith-filled friends. Nothing could stop them.

That crazy faith impressed Jesus, and breakthrough happened. This man was saved spiritually and physically because he had friends willing to do something that looked crazy!

When you are following God, get ready. He may ask you to do some things that seem pretty crazy.

That reminds me of King David bringing the Ark of God back home.

2 Samuel 6:12–22 (NIV): Now King David was told, “The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God.” So David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. 13 When those who were carrying the ark of the Lord had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. 14 Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, 15 while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets. 16 As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart. 17 They brought the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord. 18 After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord Almighty. 19 Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes. 20 When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, “How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!” 21 David said to Michal, “It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the Lord’s people Israel—I will celebrate

before the Lord. 22 I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor.”

I love that David said I will be even more undignified than this. I just need to be in the presence of the Lord. You may not understand why I worship the way that I do, but I just need to worship. And so the Scripture said he danced with all his might. And I can say with confidence David too had some faith filled friends along the way.

Scripture tells us God’s ways are not our ways. And His thoughts are not our thoughts. What may seem crazy to you is exactly what makes sense to God.

#### **Point #4 – they will help you have a God perspective.**

In the middle of a crisis, you need faith-filled friends who will help you see God’s perspective on things.

Think of the paralyzed man. He had a very limited perspective. He could only see what he could see from a mat. His world was pretty small. Can you imagine that existence?

The minute this man was up on the roof and could see the whole city, he had a new perspective. His friends helped him see a whole new world.

That's what we need in life. We need faith-filled friends in our lives that will help us see a different perspective when crisis and impossibilities come into our lives.

We need friends who will snap us out of our perspective. We need friends who will carry us to Jesus and help us see His perspective on what we are walking through.

We need faith-filled friends who take us back to Scripture to find God's perspective. We don't need their opinions. We need God's perspective and His word for our lives.

Ephesians 1:18–19 (NIV) - <sup>18</sup>I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, <sup>19</sup>and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength

See the human perspective is like being on a submarine all we see around us is the water we are in. Whereas God's perspective is more like the periscope He sees where we have been, where we are going, and any obstacles that maybe in the way to take us there.

If you don't have faith-filled friends like what we have been talking about today, I encourage you to start asking God to bring them into your life.



I want to also challenge our congregation and everyone that hears this message to be like the friends who carried this man to Jesus. There are people in this congregation who need faith-filled friends to stand beside them right now.

I want to close but before I do, I need to say just a few more things.

But first let's watch one more clip from the movie

(Show Clip 5)

I know that it can be hard to hold onto God's promises when everything looks bleak and hopeless.

After 16 days in the hospital John Smith walked out. There was still a journey ahead for recovery, but John was totally healed. And the truth is just as God resurrected John there are some things in your life that seemed to have died. But I'm here to inform you that God is calling for resurrection. God is calling for restoration. God is restoring some things in your life today.

So today I pray:

- **Holy Spirit breathe life back into homes**
- **Holy Spirit breathe life back into relationships**
- **Holy Spirit breathe life back into dreams**
- **Holy Spirit breathe life back into finances**
- **Holy Spirit breathe life back into families**
- **Holy Spirit breathe life back into churches**
- **Holy Spirit breathe life back into lives!**