

The Spirit Brings Freedom
From Bondage to Breakthrough in the Spirit
Power for Breakthrough Series – Part 1 (What God Can Do)
1 Corinthians 6:9-11 , 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Acts 10:37-38
2/21/26-2/22/26

Introduction

- The Necessity of God's Help to Transform
 - There are some areas where we are stuck in life and they have PRACTICAL solutions:
 - Compulsive habits – smoking, drinking, pot use, etc.
 - Common issues with food – needing discipline, diet, exercise, etc.
 - Anxiety or depression challenges – on a chemical or physical level needing medication.
 - Financial trouble – inability to control spending, digging out of debt, disciplining out of failed choices, etc.
 - Laziness or lack of direction – we don't have any motivation to move forward and our life is either on autopilot or we are sliding backward. Sometimes it chronic procrastination.
 - Toxic relationship – either it's abusive, or just unhealthy and we seem to be in a vicious cycle and feel trapped in it.
 - Terrible jobs – some of us are in terrible jobs that are sucking the life out of us and we have lost the will to do anything but just work and sleep. The stress and strain may have wrecked our nervous system. We don't know what else we would do for a living.
 - Self-defeating cycles – we live in shame, or disappointment with ourselves. We define ourselves by our past failures or missed opportunities.
 - These are real and serious, BUT – they are fixable with human help. There are counselors, advisors, mentors, friends, family, support networks, training, etc. that can help us get un-stuck. It's really difficult and the pain they cause is REAL. But the key to those cages may be in our pockets.
 - There are some areas where we are stuck in life and we have little to no chance without HELP FROM GOD.
 - A ruined marriage – I'm not talking about a marriage in a tough, place, nor on the rocks, I'm talking about a marriage that no counselor can see a way to repair.
 - A meaningless and purposeless life – When either hope has been completely lost or we are the walking dead, not seeing any value in who we are or what we do.
 - Full-blown addiction – it's not just bad habits; it's crossed over into full ownership of us.
 - Deeply-rooted trauma – when all the therapy in the world doesn't seem to help.
 - Distorted identity – when we are so twisted in our head that we can't see straight and who we are is lost.

- Unsolvable conditions and life threatening disease – anything that our medical system cannot help us with and it's out of their hands. It's miracle or nothing.
- Inescapable Abuse – when abuse is happening but we are not old enough or empowered enough to be able to put a stop to it.
 - These are so serious **they are in need of a MIRACLE from God**. If He doesn't intervene we cannot see a way out of it.
 - When talking about God's power to bring salvation... *"Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*¹
 - God is Able – if you hear nothing else in the message today, hear this: God is Able. **In whatever pit we dwell, He can reach us and get us out.**
 - God lives in Freedom – **God does not struggle. God does not exhaust. God lives in inexpressible joy.**
 - God wants us with Him – God wants us with Him **walking in that light, right here, right now. He wants us living in His reality, here on earth. Because...**

Where the Spirit is, there is FREEDOM

- The Year of Breakthrough – wanting full freedom that God intends for us. What's holding us back from God's best?
- Jeremiah Series – we just completed a 6-week series through the book of Jeremiah learning **what it was that sunk Israel** and led them to their darkest period of being exiled from the Promised Land in 586BC. **We learned 6 things that tend to hold us back and derail us from God's purposes.**
 - If that's the problem, what's the **solution?** – that's what we are going to spend the rest of the year on.
 - 26-pt series in Romans - Most of the year we will be studying the book of Romans line by line. **BUT first and interspersed...**
 - 6-pt Holy Spirit series - Interspersed throughout the year will be a topical series on the Holy Spirit and that starts today.
- The purpose of THIS Holy Spirit series:
 - Learning to engage with the God who dwells with His people. **The hope of freedom, whether it be in this life or the next is the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. HE, is not a vague force, but the living presence of God.**
 - He's the One who **lives with us every day.**
 - He's the One who is **cleaning up the garbage** in our lives.
 - He's the One who is **calling out the damaging** aspects of our life.
 - He's the One who is the **comforter** when we get wrecked.
 - He's the One who is the **encourager** that lifts our spirits when we are down.
 - He's the One who **provides the insights and keys** to unlock the bondage areas of our lives.

¹ Mt 19:26

- He's the **power source** to defeat the works of the enemy in our lives.
- There is **NO BREAKTHROUGH** without the Holy Spirit. If there's one thing we must get right this year to see breakthrough it's our relationship and interaction with the Holy Spirit.
- The series breakdown:
 - 1st 2 parts – we get to know Him more. **First we see His power and then we learn who He is personally.**
 - 3rd part – We study the historical event of Pentecost and His launch of the Church with His presence at the helm.
 - 4th part – We learn how to walk with the Holy Spirit day to day and what a natural supernatural life looks like.
 - 5th part – We learn how the Holy Spirit is the master of Wisdom and He leads and guides us through life by opening our eyes to what's really going on.
 - 6th part – We learn how the Holy Spirit helps us interact with God's love and pour it out to others in the most effective and powerful ways.

Lesson

- 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 - *"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."*
- Freedom is Possible
 - He can do it again - **When I look at the work that God has done in the past I know that He can do that same work today.** The situation may be different, but the power is the same.
 - When I see Jesus heal a blind man, I know **He can alter my perception of my problem and get me into a different mode of thinking.**
 - When I see Jesus heal a paralytic, I know **nothing can keep someone down that Jesus wants to rise up.**
 - When I see Jesus **restore a man possessed by a legion of demons, I know there is no spiritual bondage that God cannot break.**
 - When I see Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead I know there is **no addiction or trauma that God can't restore us from.**
- And what are the roots of the things that keep us from God's best? **God has an answer for each of them. Let's look into God's victory that the Holy Spirit can provide in our lives.**
 - *Zec 4:6 – "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts..."*
 - Freedom from sin – **This is the story of the cross.** For every bondage that sin brings, Jesus' blood is greater. So much of our lives that are separated from God and keeping us from His best, are directly linked to sin. But over and over in the New Testament, Paul and the other writers remind us that **when Jesus died for**

our sins the code was cancelled, the debt fulfilled, and we were set free from that weight of sin.

- Freedom from shame – so much that holds us back is **disappointment with ourselves**. We can't seem to let go of what we've done or what's been done to us. We allow shame to keep us in a tiny little box believing that we don't deserve to live in freedom. I'm here to tell you that God has an answer for that. **"There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"** (Rom 8:1). **He sees it, He sees you, and He still loves you and wants to use you. When shame whispers 'you are not enough', your spirit should shout back, 'but HE is and He made me enough.'**
- Freedom from fear – Fear is another bear trap that tries to keep us down. **We are afraid of failing, afraid of what people think of us, afraid of danger, and afraid of death. But God is greater than anything that threatens us.** Over and over in the Bible it says, **'fear not!'** and the reason is not that it's not dangerous or real, but that **God is greater and can take care of it. The Lord is here, what then shall we fear?**
- Freedom from religious legalism – strangely enough there are many of us who are **trapped in religiosity**. We want to live in the freedom that's been bought for us, we want to live in the joy of the Lord, but our religiousness, **our systems of performance, our paranoia of doing something wrong, keeps us from that joy.** But Jesus said, **'come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden with religious baggage, and I will give you rest.'** God has provided a system of faith that is relational and victorious. Do not let the religious yoke of slavery rest on you. **He's done too much to let needless regulation steal our peace.**
- We ARE being transformed – notice as well in the passage, verse 18, that it says that WE ARE being transformed. Meaning that **the process has already begun and is continuing and WE ARE NOT THE PRIMARY DRIVERS OF THE PROCESS.** God is. It's been said that you can tell the effectiveness of the shepherd by looking at the condition of the sheep. Why? Because it's the shepherds job to care for the sheep and get them where they need to be. **God is our shepherd.** He is leading the charge. Our job is to partner with Him in the process.
- Do I not understand your pit? – some of you who are newer to Christianity and Bridgeway may say to yourself: pastor, what do you know about my situation? You have no idea how deep of a pit I've dug for myself. The things I've done would blow your mind. Your clean-living sheltered life couldn't understand what I've been through. Here's my response: **Don't Care.**
 - It's not the pit is the rescuer – **I don't need to be an expert in pits and holes to discover how deep and dark they are. I'm an expert in Rescuers and the one I have my eye on is named Jesus and He's not afraid of any pit, He can fly down and grab you without sweating. I'm quite certain that my rescuer is able.**
- From This to That – Cleansing and Transformation is possible.

- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 : *“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*
 - Identity Issues² – although we are not going to take too much time on this list mentioned due to our limited scope of this message (we are talking about the Holy Spirit, not sin issues), it’s important to note that the terms Paul uses for sinful behaviors he refers to people as **‘being them (those behaviors).’** This means it’s not a one off, or even perhaps a struggle. It’s an identity. They have become what they do. How many drinks does it take to become a drunkard? It’s probably different than how many affairs it takes to be an adulterer, right? But **when we become an identity that stands against what God is for, therein lies the danger.** Those are identities of ‘the wicked’ (the non-believer), so Christians must not allow their behavior to make them become ‘one of those.’
 - Troubling terms³ – I will not get into this for time’s sake but this is one of those hotly debated passages regarding homosexuality. The two terms

² “The warning character of this passage is supported by yet another tie to what has gone before: the fact that Paul defines “the wicked” in terms of the six sins from 5:10–11—to which he now adds four more. The list here begins with two from before, “the sexually immoral” and “idolaters,” which in turn reflect the problems of 5:1–13 and 6:12–20 (sexual immorality) and 8:1–11:1 (idolatry). These are followed by the four new items, three of which are sexual (“adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders”), and therefore tie in with the material in chap. 5. The other, “thieves,” belongs to the matters of this section (although it ordinarily refers to actual robbery rather than to the kind of underhanded stealing suggested by our word “defraud”)....Thus he brings this whole matter to a conclusion by reaffirming: “And these things are what some of you were.” ...Paul’s concern is singular: “Your own conversion, effected by God through the work of Christ and the Spirit, is what has removed you from being among the wicked, who will not inherit the kingdom.” By implication there is an inherent imperative: “Therefore, live out this new life in Christ and stop being like the wicked.” NICNT, Gordon Fee

³ “The next two words, however, translated “male prostitutes” and “homosexual offenders” in the NIV, require considerable comment. The first word, malakoi, has the basic meaning of “soft”; but it also became a pejorative epithet for men who were “soft” or “effeminate,” most likely referring to the younger, “passive” partner in a pederastic relationship—the most common form of homosexuality in the Greco-Roman world. In many instances young men sold themselves as “mistresses” for the sexual pleasure of men older than themselves. The problem is that there was a technical word for such men, and malakos is seldom, if ever, so used. Since it is not the ordinary word for such homosexual behavior, one cannot be sure what it means in a list like this, where there is no further context to help. What is certain is that it refers to behavior of some kind, not simply to an attitude or characteristic. What makes “male prostitute” (in the sense of “effeminate call-boy”) the best guess is that it is immediately followed by a word that does seem to refer to male homosexuality, especially to the active partner. This word (arsenokoitai), however, is also difficult. This is its first appearance in preserved literature, and subsequent authors are reluctant to use it, especially when describing homosexual activity. The word is a compound of “male” and “intercourse.” There is no question as to the meaning of the koitai part of the word; it is vulgar slang for “intercourse” (which probably accounts for its seldom being found in the literature). What is not certain is whether “male” is subject (= “males who have intercourse”; thus a word for male prostitutes of all kinds) or object (= “intercourse with males”; therefore male homosexual). In light of these ambiguities, Boswell²⁷ has argued that neither word can be certainly made to denote homosexuality. His argument, however, seems to be a case of “divide and conquer.” What may be true of the words individually is one thing. But here they are not individual; they appear side by side in a vice list that is heavily weighted toward sexual sins. Although one cannot be certain, it is very likely that the NIV is moving toward a proper understanding by translating “male prostitute” and “homosexual offender,” with the proviso that “male prostitute” most likely denotes a consenting homosexual youth. For Paul’s attitude toward homosexuality in general one need refer only to his own Jewish background with its abhorrence of such, plus his description of such activity (Rom. 1:26–27).” NICNT – Gordon Fee

used: *malakoi* & *arsenokotai*, are not common words in Greek and they aren't the normal words used for homosexuality. They are clearly referring to sexual sin of men and the meaning of 'effeminate' is there, but how they all link is not clear. It seems to be referring to homosexual sexual activity but it's unclear whether it's in cultic prostitution, pederasty, regular homosexual relationships, etc.

- Life in the Spirit, not self-effort – This is Paul's way of explaining the mysterious power of God and what He can do in our lives. Notice:
 - 3 levels of purification and breakthrough: by Jesus through the Spirit.
 - Washed – this means that **all that sin distorted, tainted, ruined, soiled, the Holy Spirit supernaturally purified and cleansed until it was whiter than snow** in our spirits.
 - Sanctified – sanctification is a process whereby **we are continually cleansed in real time in behaviors, lifestyle, mindset, and will. This is the process of making our souls and bodies match and align with our purified spirits.** Holy Spirit knows how to take out the garbage.
 - Justified – This means that **what the devil could hold over our head due to the sin that we committed and the condemnation that we SHOULD incur, the Holy Spirit applies the blood of Jesus too and calls it fulfilled and done.**
- Never alone – **One of the most important principles of the Holy Spirit's relation to us that can never be overstated is HIS LIVING IN US.** We, as Christians, are **never alone.** Not now, not later, not ever. Our eternal life began when we believed and trusted in Jesus Christ and He sent the Holy Spirit to PERMANENTLY be with us forever.
 - Acts 10:37-38: *"...you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."*
 - What the Spirit did with Jesus – notice that it says that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and that came with power. **Power for what? Power for breakthrough.** God, the Holy Spirit was right there with God, the Son, the whole time in a practical and tangible way. This meant that **breakthrough flowed.**
 - What this means – what this means is that **we have a continually connection with the Holy Spirit so that WHATEVER comes up in our lives, we don't have to go find God, He's right here.** We don't have to wonder about a solution. He has one and is ready. We don't have to find the Truth, We have the Truth.
- Flowing principle – Jesus described God's presence within us, the presence of the Holy Spirit, as a **continuing flowing water.** It means that it never goes dry. It

never stops. It means that God doesn't grow tired of protecting. It means that the Holy Spirit is full energy ready for any situation.

- The power of Christian resilience - How is it possible that **some Christians you just can't keep down?**
 - **Paul and Silas singing** in the prison (Acts 16ff).
 - How can Paul confidently write 2 Co 4:7-9 – *“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed...”*
 - Because he has secret help – **He has help coming from another dimension.**
 - Like **Moses** winning the war with Pharaoh – a war started by God, fought by God, won by God. From impossible to possible.
 - Like **David** beating a giant – a fight God picked, God fought, and God won.
 - Like **Daniel** and the Hebrew boys refusing to succumb to pressure – Situations God set up, God personally walked them through.
 - The Holy Spirit is our X-Factor.
 - God never said we wouldn't be knocked down – He just promised that we didn't have to stay down. **Jesus got knocked down all the way to the grave. But on the 3rd day He got right back up again.** How? The Holy Spirit.
- **Transformation and Breakthrough tends to be a PROCESS**, not a one-time event. **Be patient, let the Master do His work.** We can transform more and more each day but the final product of sanctification doesn't happen overnight. I say again, be patient. God's getting us there.

Conclusion

- God is Able – Whatever you take from this message, take this...God CAN. He is Able. Freedom is possible and with the Holy Spirit, it's Probable.
- Next Week – How a personal relationship with God leads to a lifestyle of FREEDOM.