

SERIES: THE PROCESS OF BREAKTHROUGH
PART 12: HELP OTHERS

This week we conclude our series THE PROCESS OF BREAKTHROUGH. This morning (afternoon) I want to look at the last step: Step 12. The H in the word Breakthrough stands for: **Help others by yielding myself to God and sharing the breakthroughs I have experienced with others and walk with them in their breakthroughs.**

God wants to use your experiences to help other people. He wants to use YOU. He wants to redeem the pain in your life for the benefit of other people. Usually we think God only uses real gifted, real talented people. That's not true. God uses ordinary people. Usually we think, "God uses my strength." God says, **"I want to use your weaknesses."** Because people are impressed with your strength; they're helped when you're honest about your weaknesses. You share your strength, they say, "Big deal, I'll never have that." You share your weaknesses, they say, "I can relate to that." As you share from your hurts, habits, and hang-ups of things you're breaking through God wants to use you, and that's what Step 12 is all about. **Yield myself to be used by God to bring this Good News to others. When you understand this, that God uses your weaknesses and pain, life takes on a whole new meaning.** But when you begin to practice this step, then you have genuine breakthrough. This is the key to your recovery and restoration. This is what God is getting at in your life when you surrender your life to Jesus Christ. **The**

proof of genuine breakthrough is when you begin to focus outside of yourself. That means your breakthrough is leading to life transformation. You stop being so self absorbed—my needs, my hurts, my problems—and you start saying, “How can I help other people?” The proof of authentic breakthrough is that you want to help others, not just keep focusing on what's happened to you. This is the key to fulfilling what God has given to us as our **Prophetic Word for 2018: Living out the Process of Breakthrough Together in Community – Acting in Faith, Bathed in Love.** This is exactly what Galatians 5:13 says, **“For you have been called to live in freedom--not freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, but freedom to serve one another in love.”** This is God’s purpose for your personal recovery and our recovery as a church family.

As we wrap this up, I want to do two things: First, talk about why has God allowed my pain, and second, how can I use my pain to help others.

I. Why God allowed my pain

Many reasons, but we only have time for four this morning: God allows my pain because:

A. He’s given me a free will

A choice. Genesis: 1:27 says, **“You were made in the image of God.”** How are you like God? God gave you a choice. You can choose good or bad, right or wrong, evil or life. God

says, “You can reject Me or accept Me. It's your choice.” Why? God didn't want a bunch of puppets. He could have made you where you had no freewill at all. He could have made you where every day you bowed down three times and prayed, and you always do what's right, never what's wrong. But God wanted people who love Him voluntarily. You can't say you love somebody unless you have the opportunity to not love them. You can't say you're good unless you've had the option to not be good, to be bad. So God has given you freewill and free choice. This is a leading truth about boundaries. In order for there to be true love that must be true freedom—the freedom to choose for or against someone or some decision.

Freewill is not only a privilege, but it is also a responsibility that carries consequences with it. When we make sinful, selfish choices they cause all kinds of painful consequences in our lives. So it's good that I am free and I can choose, but it carries with it consequences, and because I often choose the wrong thing, that causes pain in my life. I can choose to experiment with drugs. If I get addicted, it's my responsibility. I can choose to be sexually promiscuous, if I get a disease it's my consequence. God says, “Yes, I would not like for you to have this pain, but it's part of the package that comes with the freedom to choose your own way.”

Not only does God give you a free will, He gives everyone else one too. Sometimes they don't do the right thing and you get hurt as an innocent victim. Those of you who have been hurt deeply by a parent, a former spouse, a teacher, a friend, a

relative—God could have prevented that hurt from happening to you. All He would have had to do would be to take away that person's freewill to do wrong. But if He had done that, to be fair, He would have to have taken away your freewill too. You see the dilemma? The problem is that by having a free will we get a blessing, but we also get a burden. And God says, “I'm not going to overrule your will.” God doesn't send anybody to hell; you choose to go there by rejecting everything that He does. He says, “I love you, I want you to be a part of My family.” If I say, “Forget it, God,” thumb my nose, and walk out the other door, I can't blame anybody but myself. God gives you the ability to choose.

God allows my pain...

B. To get my attention

God uses pain to get our attention. Pain is a warning light, a buzzer, an alarm. It says, “It's time. Something's wrong.” Pain is not your problem. Your depression, your anxiety, your fear is not really your problem. It's a warning light that says there's something else that's your problem. It's just a symptom of your problem. Pain just says, “Something is drastically wrong in my life.” It's God's megaphone. C.S. Lewis has written, “**God whispers to us in our pleasures, but He shouts to us in our pain.**” Wake up! Something's wrong. God shouts to us in our pain. Proverbs 20:30 (TEV), “**Sometimes it takes a painful situation to make us change our ways.**” **We don't change when we see the light but when we feel the heat.**

There was a man who was Most Likely to Succeed in high school. He was a brilliant kid in school, lived in Texas, his dad was a millionaire. He had everything at his fingertips, the most popular kid in the city. He grew up and became a semi-pro golfer, great businessman, Mr. Charisma. And got into cocaine. Then started dealing cocaine. He got thrown into the Federal Penitentiary. While he was there in that penitentiary he gave his life to Christ, and he came out of that prison and he started a ministry called Exodus Ministry to help ex-cons reactivate themselves into normal society. He said, **“The greatest thing that happened to me was going to prison.”** God uses problems and uses pain to get our attention. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 7:9-10—the purpose was he had to write them the truth, even though it was painful for them. **“Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to have remorse and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants His people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way.”**¹⁰ **For God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek salvation. We will never regret that kind of sorrow. But sorrow without repentance is the kind that results in death.”**

Remember the story of Jonah? Jonah was going one way, and God said, “I want you to go the other way.” So He provided a typical Mediterranean cruise for him. And at the bottom of the ocean in Jonah 2:7, **“As my life was slipping away, I remembered the Lord. And my earnest prayer went out**

to You in Your Holy Temple.” Isn't that a great verse? God uses pain to get our attention.

God allows my pain...

C. To teach me to depend on Him

Paul's example, 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, **“We were crushed and completely overwhelmed, and we thought we would never live through it. ⁹In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we learned not to rely on ourselves, but on God who can raise the dead.”** You don't know that God is all you need until God's all you have. When you've lost it all and it's all falling apart, you don't know that God's all you need until you realize He's all you got. And He is all I need. And if you never had a problem, you'd never know God could solve them. God allows pain to teach you to depend on Him. Psalm 119:67 & 71, **“I used to wander off until You disciplined me; but now I closely follow Your word.... ⁷¹The suffering You sent was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to Your decrees.”** The truth is, some things we only learn through pain. It's the only way we learn them. In this series you've heard so far 10 different people, and you will hear another one today stand up here and share lessons that they've only learned through pain, life's greatest teacher. **(Barbara comes up and stands by Pastor Scott)**

God allows my pain...

D. To give me a ministry to others

God allows pain in my life to give me a ministry to others. It makes me humble, sympathetic, sensitive to others' needs. This is what Step 12 is all about: **Yield myself to God to help other people. The truth is, pain prepares you to serve. For this to be true it all depends on how you respond. Your pain can make you BITTER or BETTER.** It is your choice in how you respond to the pain that you encounter.

Barbara Mozo – Testimony

2 Corinthians 1:4, **“God comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.”**

Everyone needs breakthroughs of some type: Spiritual breakthroughs, emotional breakthroughs, relational breakthroughs, financial breakthroughs, vocational breakthroughs, intellectual breakthroughs, and physical breakthroughs. We all have hurts, habits, hang-ups. No one's perfect. Who can better help an alcoholic than somebody who has struggled with alcoholism? Who can better help somebody dealing with the pain of abuse than someone who was abused themselves? Who can better help somebody who lost their job and went bankrupt than another person who lost his job or her job and went bankrupt? Who can better help a couple of parents who have a child, a teenager, who's going off the deep end than a couple who had a child who went off

the deep end? God wants to use and recycle the pain in your life to help others, but you've got to be open about it and honest. If you keep that hurt to yourself, you're wasting it.

There's a beautiful story in the Bible, in Genesis, about the story of Joseph. He was so mistreated. People did incredible things to this guy. He was good guy. He didn't deserve the pain in his life. One day all eleven of his brothers decided to gang up against him and sell him into slavery. And then they went back home and told their dad he'd been eaten by a lion. That's what I call a dysfunctional family. Major problem here. He's sold into slavery and taken from Israel into Egypt, into a whole foreign country. He's sold into slavery there. He's doing his job, he's keeping his life pure, and his master's wife tries to seduce him, and he says, “No that wouldn't be right.” So she cries, “Rape!” He's falsely accused of rape and thrown into prison. Joseph's whole life is downhill all the way. But God knew exactly what He was doing, putting him in position that raised him up to second in command in Egypt. And God used him to save, not only one, but two nations from destruction and famine. Later his brothers came to him to get food, expecting to have their heads cut off, and he says in Genesis 50:20, **“As far as I am concerned, God turned into good what you meant for evil. He brought me to the high position I have today so I could save the lives of many people.”**

God never wastes a hurt. But you can waste it if you don't learn from it and you don't share it with other people. How can other people be blessed if you don't share the problems

you're going through with them to encourage them on how you made it?

II. How God uses my pain to help others

This is what Step 12 is all about in **THE PROCESS OF BREAKTHROUGH**. First Peter 3:15 is the basis for Step 12: **“Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.”** You need to be prepared to give an answer to, How did you make it in life? How did you breakthrough the barriers, blockades and bondages that have been in your life? Be prepared. Here's what I suggest you do:

You need to make a list of all the experiences you've had in life to this day, positive and negative. Ones you've caused and ones you didn't cause. Make a list of all those experiences. Then you ask, **“What did I learn from that experience? How did God help me make it through that tough time?”** Ask God, **“How did You help me through that tough time?”** Then write your story out on paper. Why? Thoughts disentangle themselves when they pass through the lips and fingertips. Write it out. Then ask yourself, **“Who could best benefit from hearing my story?”** The answer is people who are going through, right now, what you've already gone through, who are just a little bit behind you in the process. And you say to God, **“I am available.”** Then get ready. Because if you get ready to share the good news about God and how God has worked in your life God will open more doors than you could ever imagine. There are people

who need to hear your story all over this world, who are going through what you've gone through.

Sometimes God wants you to take the initiative. This is called intervention. Galatians 6:1-3: **“Dear brothers and sisters, if another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. ²Share each other’s troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ. ³If you think you are too important to help someone in need, you are only fooling yourself. You are really a nobody.”** Notice this is a command. God doesn't say, “It's a good idea if you share.” He says, “Do it.” If you are a believer, you are to share in the problems and troubles of other people. That is a command. If you're not doing it, you're not obeying God.

Three suggestions in sharing your story—because you have a story to tell, and God does not want you to waste the hurt, the problems you've had. How do you share:

A. Be humble

We're all in the same boat. We're all fellow strugglers. When you share your story, when you witness, it's basically one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. You're not saying, “I've got it all together,” because you don't. You're growing and maturing in Jesus each day, if this is the way you choose to live your life. You're on the process of breakthrough. As you're breaking through barriers, be humble

and say, “We're all in this together; here's what happened to me.”

B. Be real

Be honest about your hurts and faults. We've seen this modeled by those telling their stories the past 11 weeks, as they've stood up here and opened up themselves, been transparent and vulnerable and real. Do you realize the courage it took for those people to stand up here and do that? I'm grateful to be a part of a church family where real people can share real problems and real solutions without feeling put down or feeling guilty about it. We are committed to maintaining that atmosphere of acceptance in this church. **Loved ones, this kind of acceptance is the key to making CVCHURCH a Place to Belong, a Place to Believe, and a Place to Become.** You help other people by being honest about your hurts. It helps them open up. The other amazing thing is when you share your story it not only gives hope to them but gives healing to you. Every time you share your story with somebody, you get a little bit stronger. You're healed a little bit more. You begin growth. People join Celebrate Recovery because of their pain, but they stay in Celebrate Recovery because of their growth. It keeps them growing in their life.

C. Share, don't lecture

Just share your story. God wants you to be a witness, not a defense attorney. You don't argue anyone into heaven. You

can't force a person into heaven. You just share, "This is what happened to me."

I want to challenge you to take four action steps:

1. If you have not yet committed your life to Jesus Christ, do so today

What are you waiting on? The greatest tragedy would be for you to go all the way through this series, hear these great truths, and the hope that it brings, and not do anything about it, like stepping across the line, giving your life to Christ. If you haven't done so, do so today.

2. Write your story out

Take some time to set down and look at, "What has God done in my life, the good, the bad, and the ugly, and how can He use that to help other people."

3. Commit yourself to this church family for support

Attendance is not enough for breakthrough. It takes commitment and it takes relationships.

4. Ask God to give you someone you could share your story with, to share the good news of how God can make the difference in somebody's life

The world is full of people who need your story, and if you don't tell it, where are they going to hear it from? You are the only Bible some people will ever read. They wouldn't be caught a hundred yards from this church. They'll never hear me, but you have a story that can reach them, that they can identify with. God wants to use you. We don't need any more TV evangelists, we have too many already. That's why this church is never going to be on TV. What I want is you sharing your story with normal people, because you can reach people I could never reach, because your experience is different from mine. Once you step across the line, become a believer, why doesn't God just take you on the fast track to heaven and get you there quickly? There are two things you can't do in heaven. You can pray in heaven, sing, sleep, eat, relax, have fun, fellowship with other Christians, read your Bible. There are only two things you cannot do. One of them is sin. It's a perfect place. The other is tell the Good News with people who have never heard. Which of those two reasons do you think God leaves you on earth to do? Obvious, isn't it? The moment you step across the line, you become a representative of Jesus Christ. It's called the Great Commission. It's part of your job description, if you claim to be a believer, to share the Good News with other people. The world is far more ready to receive it than we are ready to share it, and there are people who need to hear your story. You don't have to be a biblical genius. You just say, "This is what happened to me." That's the most powerful kind of story anyway. "I don't know where all the verses are, it doesn't matter where all the verses are. This is what happened to me." Nobody can refute that. That's a personal experience.

Acts 20:24: Paul says this about his life, **“But my life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus--the work of telling others the Good News about God’s wonderful kindness and love.”** What is that work? The work of telling the others the Good News about God's mighty love and kindness. There is no greater accomplishment in life than helping somebody find assurance of heaven. Because when you do that, you've made a friend for eternity. When you get to heaven, God's going to say, “This is great. You're here. Did you bring anybody with you?” You make a friend for eternity when you share Christ. There is no greater accomplishment than to have their eternity secured, no greater joy, no greater satisfaction, than helping somebody find the Good News. God wants to use you. Share your story. He made you for a purpose. Can you imagine getting to Heaven and seventy years from today, somebody walks up to you in heaven, “I just want to thank you.” “Thank me? I don't even know you.” “No, but you were one of the members at CVCHURCH. You were going there, and you were praying, and you joined, and you supported the church with your gifts, your time, and your tithes. And fifty years after you died, that church reached me for Jesus Christ. And I'm in heaven because of you and I just want to thank you.” Do you think that will be worth it? I make no apology whatsoever in saying that maybe the most significant thing you do with your life is first, give your life to Christ, become a part of this CVCHURCH family, get involved in a ministry, start sharing your story. It will far outlast anything you do in your career, far outlast anything you do in your hobby,

because what we're talking about here has eternal implications, getting people from darkness into light, from hell into heaven, from an eternity without God to an eternity with God, and people will be thanking you the rest of eternity. There is no more significant cause in life.

I challenge you to take this 12th step with me: **“I yield myself to be used by God to bring this Good News to other people, in my example and in my words.”**